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Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India

Volume I (1000-1526)

L. MEHTA

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This second revised edition gives an analytical and critical account of the political and military history of early medieval India. Contemporary and near contemporary literary sources are liberally utilised for the reconstruction of the past.

The author lays special emphasis on the national aspect of history and gives an incisive analysis of the Indo-Muslim polity of the times. Historical facts have been reorganised and reinterpreted through clear and illuminating expositions, refreshing characterisation of historic personalities and objective assessment of events and movements. Together with maps, appendices, glossary and an elaborate index, the volume makes a rich contribution to the advancement of modern historical literature.

J.L. Mehta, a specialist in medieval and modern Indian history, and a prolific writer, with proficiency in Urdu, Persian and Tibetan, besides Hindi, Punjabi and Sanskrit, has published a number of books, articles and monographs.

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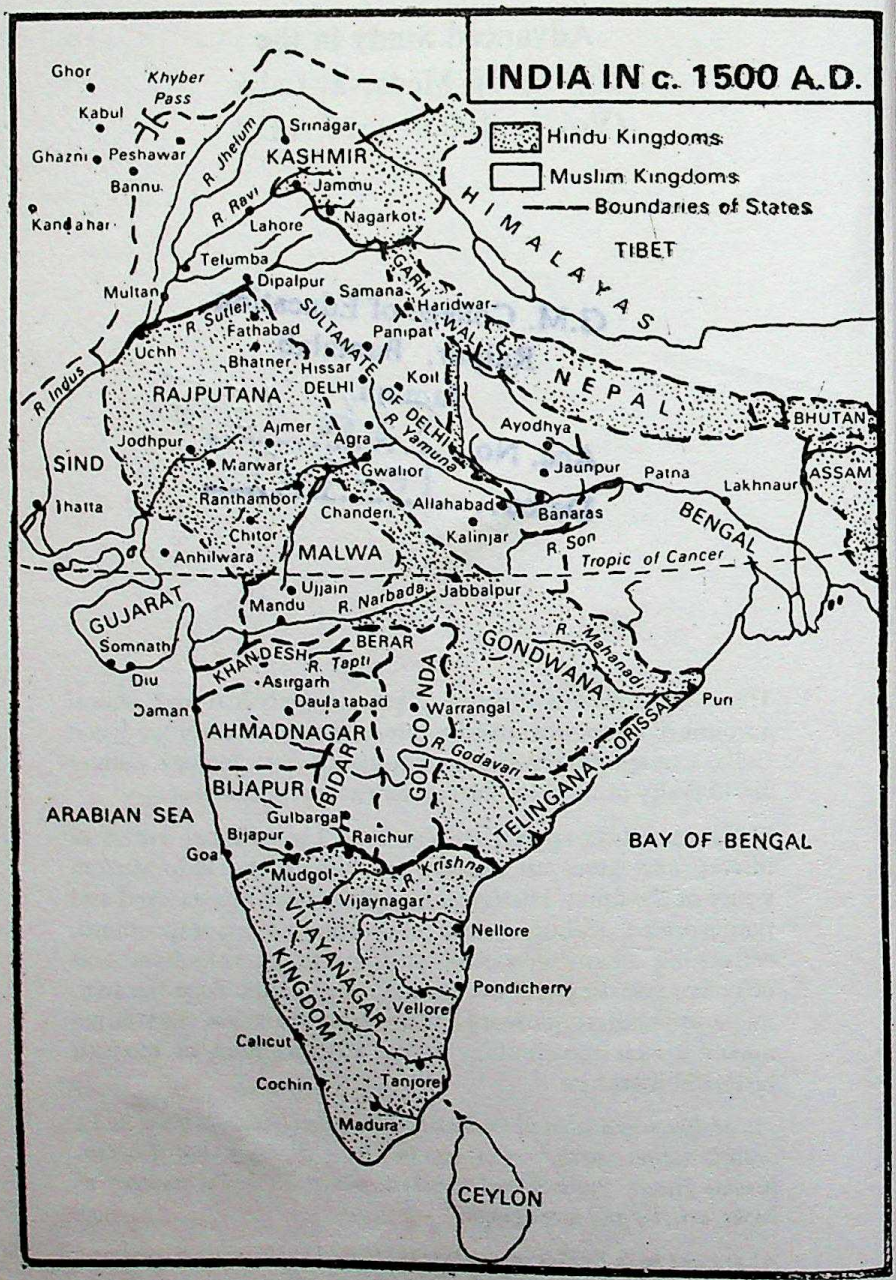

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Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India

(Vol.I: 1000—1526 A.D.)

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TO
PARAS AND DAISY
WITH
LOVE

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Preface to the Second Revised Edition

The second revised edition of the book is being presented to the readers with a sense of fulfilment by the author. The task of its revision was made comparatively easy by the pleasure and satisfaction derived from correspondence with scholars and teachers of the subject and by the challenge of press opinions.

Dr Suryanath U. Kamath pointed out, in the *Deccan Herald*, that the Bahmanids and the Vijayanagar empire had been given a sketchy treatment in the book. This deficiency has now been made good by the addition of a full-fledged chapter, serial number *ten*. It explains the circumstances leading to the origin and growth of the Bahmani and Vijayanagar states and the part played by them in the political life of the country in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. *Section three* of the *chapter* discusses the nature of the Bahmani rule and its impact on the society and culture of the Deccan ; the contributions made by the Bahmanids towards the development of education and learning, and art and architecture, have been especially highlighted. Similarly, an attempt has been made, in *section four* of the *chapter*, to sketch the life and condition of the people in the Vijayanagar state. Chapter *nine* of the book has, accordingly, been recast by deleting all references to the Bahmani and Vijayanagar states. It is now redesignated as "Northern India in the Fifteenth Century".

On the suggestions received from many quarters, yet another chapter, serial number *twelve*, entitled "Architectural Monuments of the Sultans", has been added. It attempts to explain the rationale of the building activity of the *sultans*, analyses the main points of difference between the indigenous and Islamic architectural traditions, and elaborates the various stages in which synthesis between two took place during the Sultanate Period, leading, ultimately, to the emergence of what has been called the Indo-Islamic Architecture.

Thus the revised edition of the book contains twelve chapters instead of ten. The intensive revision of the text resulted in a number of additions and alterations in matters of factual information and on points of critical analysis and assessment.

The revision and enlargement of the text necessitated revision of the Index as well, which has now been made much more comprehensive than before ; besides indexing historical names and places, it also refers to the contemporary historiographers and their works, used in the body of the text.

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The readers would be glad to know that this publication has been approved by the Government of India as a "University-Level Text Book" and that the National Book Trust, India, has undertaken to subsidise its 'low-priced paperbacks for the benefit of the students'.

The author owes a debt of gratitude to his revered teacher, Professor Hari Ram Gupta, and all those scholars who have been helpful to him in enhancing the academic value of this study. All suggestions for its further improvement would be highly appreciated.

Panjab University
Chandigarh
August 25, 1986

J.L. MEHTA

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Preface to the First Edition

The chronological division of history into ancient, medieval and modern periods is a European concept, applicable primarily to the western civilisation ; it came into vogue from about the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The writers of European history used the term 'medieval' not merely in a descriptive but also qualitative or connotative manner; it was employed to distinguish a social and cultural situation which was inferior from the ancient or 'classical' values and characteristics. The medieval period of Indian history does not, however, correspond exactly with the 'middle age' of Europe, also dubbed as 'the dark age of the European civilisation'; according to one definition, it covered a period between 476 and 1500 A.D. from the breakdown of the Roman empire in the West to the beginning of Renaissance and the Reformation. These dates cannot be taken up as a working hypothesis either for the beginning or conclusion of the medieval Indian period. An attempt made by some historians to classify Indian history into hindu (ancient), muslim (medieval) and British (modern) periods was still more unfortunate, because it employed religion and race as the criteria which had serious repercussions on the subsequent political developments; it sowed the seeds of communal disharmony and led to the 'partition' of the country in 1947. Whatever criterion that may be adopted for reperiodisation of Indian history, one thing is clear ; the traditional equations of 'medieval' with 'muslim' and 'the medieval Indian history' with the era of 'muslim rule in India' are not valid, and have rightly been discarded by most of the modern historians of Indian history.

The author takes the eleventh century to be the beginning of early medieval period in the history of India. It lands us into the so-called 'rajput period' of ancient Indian civilisation. The 'age of imperial Kanauj' was over with the death of Harsha Vardhana (606-47); the efforts made by its ex-feudatories and other princes, including Yasovarman (c 700-70) of Kanauj, the Palas of Bengal, the Rashtrakutas of the Deccan, and the Gurjara-Pratiharas of Malwa to re-unify India under one national government bore no fruit. India, in the beginning of the eleventh century, was parcelled out into over one hundred regional kingdoms and petty principalities whose rulers identified themselves with their dominant ruling clans, tribes or communities, lacked overall national consciousness and freely indulged in self-destructive and suicidal warfare with one another. The Indian society, with its decadent political structure, defunct military system, inherent socio-religious defects and economic imbalance which created a gulf between the masses and the socio-political

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leadership, carried *ipso facto* the seeds of its own destruction. Toynbee holds that 'the self-stultified Hindu Civilisation' of the period 'was not assassinated' by the turks; the latter simply gave it a *coup d' grace.* The period of stress and strain, covering the eleventh and twelfth centuries of the Indian history forms the subject matter of the first four chapters of this study. The opening chapter gives a glimpse of pre-muslim India under the caption, *Twilight of Ancient India.* Chapter 2 deals with the Indian expeditions of Sabuktagin and Mahmud of Ghazni which shook the political fabric of northern and western India, *albeit* the *Ghaznavid inroads* 'did not cut deeper into the flesh' of the contemporary Indian politics and had no more serious effect upon the course of its history than Alexander's invasion in 326-25 B.C. The third chapter draws a pen portrait of northern India when it enjoyed a respite for over a century and a quarter (1030-1175) from foreign invasions. This offered a golden opportunity and more than enough time to the Indian socio-political leadership to *rally* itself and be prepared to defend its independence by setting its house in order on national considerations. To the misfortune of the country, the rajputs had learnt nothing and forgotten everything of their earlier encounters with the Turks; they exhibited a total lack of imagination in tackling the problem of political unity and national defence. Torn by mutual jealousies, dissensions and self-destructive tendencies, as ever before, the Indian princes failed to take concerted action against the turks led by Muhammad Ghori and, as a consequence, were crumbled to dust in quick succession under the iron heels of the invaders. The story of the 'second holocaust' (1175-1205) has been described in chapter 4. Muhammad Ghori and his Turkish 'slave' generals conquered northern India in the last quarter of the twelfth century and laid the foundations of the turkish rule in Delhi.

On the death of Muhammad Ghori, his Indian possessions were inherited by his turkish 'slave' officer Qutubuddin Aibek—a foreign immigrant, who set up as an independent ruler at Lahore and untagged his dominions from the apron-strings of the Ghaznavid empire. His son and successor Aram Shah was overthrown by Iltutmish—'a slave of slave' Aibek, who transferred his capital to Delhi in 1211, thus bringing into existence what is termed as the 'sultanate of Delhi'. The turkish rulers of India were styled *sultans*—'the kings', and their dominions accordingly came to be known as 'the sultanate'. The story of the foundation of the sultanate of Delhi under the dynamic leadership of three 'slave dynasties' (1206-90), in the teeth of hindu opposition, has been narrated in detail in chapter 5. Iltutmish and Balban, the founders of the second and the third 'slave' dynasty respectively, made a signal contribution towards the consolidation of the muslim rule in northern India; they protected the infant state from internal disorders and external dangers and laid its foundations so deep that, soon afterwards, it was transformed, by the strenuous efforts of Alauddin Khalji, into the

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imperial government of India which held its sway directly or indirectly over the whole of the subcontinent.

Soon after the establishment of their rule in India, the turks were cut off from their ancestral lands of central Asia which were overrun by the mongols. Iltutmish and Balban were hard-pressed to protect their infant turkish state from the mongol menace. Before the turn of the century, the turks were well established in *Hindustan* which they had adopted as the country of domicile. Islam became one of the popular Indian creeds and the muslims came to constitute a part and parcel of the Indian society; they were the Indian muslims for all intents and purposes. The Khalji revolution of 1290 sounded the death-knell of the foreign privileged turkish nobility who had perpetuated their dominance in the politics of Delbi for nearly a century; the Khaljis were cent per cent Indian muslims. Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316) was by far the greatest of all the monarchs of early medieval India ; except Sher Shah Suri and Akbar, no muslim ruler of India stands comparison with him by the pursuit of a vigorous imperial policy, based on the *chakravartin* principles of ancient era, he unified the whole of the country and brought it under the control of a powerful central government. He raised an 'invincible' imperial army which struck terror in the hearts of the mongols and stood as a bulwark against foreign invasions; it maintained the political unity and integrity of the country by severely dealing with those who ever dared to defy the authority of the central government of India. Alauddin Khalj secularised the state politics, and threw open the public services to the commoners, including the hindus, the muslim converts to Islam and other unprivileged muslims. He abolished the *zamindari* system and introduced measurement of land as the basis for the assessment of the state demand—one of the self-established ancient Indian customs. He oppressed the nobility but provided great relief to the common man; during his reign, the prices of goods were low; the foodstuffs and other necessaries of life were available easily and in abundance. Hoarding, blackmarketing and cheating by the business community and exploitation by the middlemen was heard of no more. Alauddin Khalji tamed the civil services and suppressed the bureaucratic evils of indiscipline, corruption and bribery; none but the most honest and efficient officials had the chance of survival under the vigilant eye of the central government. In certain matters of civil administration, land reforms, military organisation and socio-economic policies, Alauddin Khalji anticipated Sher Shah Suri and Akbar; his administrative set up carried the seeds of a progressive and secular state which, given the opportunity to take their roots for two or three generations more, could have advanced the progress of the country by at least two centuries. The Khalji dynasty of the sultans, therefore, occupies a place of pride in the national history of early medieval India and has received an intensive treatment in chapter 6 of the present study.

Chapter 7 deals with the Tughluqs who supplied the second and the last imperial dynasty of Delhi during the period under

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review. Muhammad bin Tughluq (1325-51), 'the wisest fool' of his day, was, nevertheless, the second greatest sultan of Delhi during whose reign the imperial government of India attained the maximum territorial dimensions. Partly an idealist and partly a visionary, he formulated lofty projects and 'hair-brain' schemes which carried the elements of modernity and national integration, *albeit*, as a most impracticable man, he lacked the patience and administrative skill to implement his plans effectively. His subjects misunderstood him, and the selfish and corrupt bureaucracy failed to comprehend his policies and programmes. In rejecting him, the Indians also rejected the integrity of the central authority and political unity of the country, and reverted to the feudal pattern of 'the dark age' which had received a serious jolt since the days of Alauddin Khalji. Firoze Tughluq (1351-88), the last great sultan of Delhi, was a philanthropist who utilised the resources of the state for public welfare activities and exerted himself to promote the happiness and well-being of his subjects. An analytical as well as critical account of their achievements and failures has been given in this study.

The sultanate showed signs of its decline during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq. The process of its decay gained momentum under Firoze Tughluq, and once the mighty turkish empire of India was reduced to a petty principality of Delhi within a decade of the latter's death. Still known as the sultanate of Delhi, it suffered the pangs of death during the next century and a quarter. Amir Timur, the greatest turkish leader of his day, struck a fatal blow to it and proclaimed its virtual death to the whole of the muslim world. The sultanate exhibited some signs of recovery under the Lodhis who founded the first tribal monarchy of the Afghans in Delhi *albeit* their rule was like 'the last flicker of the dying lamp'; the guns of Babar sounded the death-knell of the sultanate in the first historic battle of Panipat on April 21, 1526. A brief description of all these developments has been given in chapter 8 which also carries a critical analysis of the important causes of decline and downfall of the sultanate of Delhi.

The sultanate lasted 320 years from 1206 to 1526; during this period, exactly speaking, thirty-two persons (including one woman) sat on the throne—two at Lahore and thirty in Delhi, giving an average of ten years' reign to each. Some of them, like Qutubuddin Aibek, Iltutmish, Balban, Alauddin Khalji, Ghiasuddin Tughluq, Muhammad bin Tughluq and Firoze Tughluq stand head and shoulders above all the rest; they left an indelible mark on the course of history of their times and the study of their political and military history is as important as ever. No matter what factors and motives made the Turko-Afghan rulers struggle for the control of the state machinery, their political actions, military campaigns, court intrigues and the state-craft influenced the life and culture of the people under their charge.

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In the course of its disintegration, from 1335 to 1400, the sultanate of Delhi gave birth to a number of regional and provincial states and feudal principalities. These included among others the Bahmani and Vijayanagar kingdoms of the south, the provincial muslim states of Malwa, Gujarat, Jaunpur and Bengal and the rajput kingdoms of Mewar and Marwar. The sultanate as a binding force between the distant provinces had ceased to exist and the political dismemberment of India was complete; the country thus presented once again a dismal picture from the political angle in the fifteenth century. Chapter 9 analyses the general characteristics of the fifteenth century India and gives in outline the political and military history of the important regional and provincial states. The socio-cultural development of early medieval India does not fall within the purview of this study, which has been reserved for detailed treatment in a separate volume.

The tenth chapter has been devoted to the study of political institutions of the sultanate of Delhi. The sultanate was a theocracy whose *grandees* were expected to enforce Islamic polity in India *albeit* the political institutions set up by them were deeply influenced by the Indian traditions and customs and incorporated many elements of the rajput polity with or without modifications. Some of the practices and policies of sultanate were actually opposed to the spirit of the orthodox Islamic theology. The concluding part of the chapter gives a brief account of the archaeological monuments of the sultans which reveal a vigorous inter-action and synthesis between the 'Islamic' and the ancient Indian archaeological concepts and forms on an extensive scale. These are an index of a healthy and constructive give-and-take between the two styles as also the communion that took place between the hindus and the muslims during the early medieval age.

The brief resume, as given above, would help the reader in forming a general idea of the main contents of the book as also of the line of thought and approach adopted by the author in attempting a descriptive, analytical and critical account of the political and military history of early medieval India. A fully documented article on the *Contemporary Sources of History*, along with the modern works available on each aspect, precedes the text by way of *introduction*. Maximum use has been made of the contemporary literary sources which have occasionally been referred to in the text and liberally reproduced in the footnotes. The references given within the body of the narrative are obviously those which have been recognised as the historical facts or standard observations of the contemporaries on the subject; whereas, the extracts given in the footnotes usually supplement or contradict the main argument in partially true or exaggerated terms, the latter may provide an additional opportunity to the reader to familiarise himself/herself with and feel interested in the further study of the contemporary works. In the modern

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age of intensive research and specialisation in microscopic studies none can pretend to be *au fait* on each and every aspect of the national and regional history of the period which covers more than five hundred years. Obviously, the author, in his extensive treatment of the subject matter, has leaned heavily on the original researches done by numerous other historians and is under heavy obligations to all of them. With due regard to the considered opinions of modern historiographers of medieval India, the historical facts have, nevertheless, been recognised and reinterpreted by the author wherever deemed necessary. He has attempted to give a critical analysis of the important political-cum-military events and developments, and has reassessed their impact on the course of history of the times. How far he has been successful in this endeavour and whether the assessment so made is objective and impartial or otherwise is for the readers to judge. Again, all opinions expressed in the book are the personal views of the author and, in no way, represent those of the Panjab University Chandigarh—his *alma mater*, or the scholars who have blessed him in its preparation.

All valuable advice from the modern historiographers of medieval India and constructive suggestions from the general readers for the improvement of the book would be received with thanks and acknowledged gratefully in the next edition of the publication.

Chandigarh
August 25, 1979

J.L. MEHTA

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CONTENTS

Preface to the Second Edition vii

Preface to the First Revised Edition ix

Introduction : Contemporary Sources of History 1

Indian Historiography—An Islamic Heritage

Contemporary Writers and their Works

Chachnama, Alberuni, Utbi, Abul Fazl Baihaqi, Hasan Nizami, Minhajus Siraj, Amir Khusrau, Ziauddin Barani, Firoze Tughluq's Autobiography, Shams i Siraj Afif, Amir Timur's Autobiography, Yahya bin Ahmad Sirhindi, Khwaja Abdullah Malik Isami, Mir Khwand, Khondamir.

The Travelogues

Ibn Battuta, Abdur Razzak, Marco Polo, Nicolo Conti, Duarte Barbosa, Domingos Paes.

Mughal Historians of Early Medieval India

Babar's Autobiography, Abul Fazl, Badauni, Nizamuddin Ahmad, Firishta, Ahmad Yadgar, Abdullah of Koil, Khwaja Niamatullah Haravi, Mir Muhammad Masum, Ghulam Husain Salim, Sikander bin Muhammad, Ali Muhammad Khan, Mir Abu Turab Vali, Saypad Ali Tabataba, Rafiuddin Shirazi, Riyazul Insha of Mahmud Gawan.

Indigenous Literature

Rajatarangini, Prithviraja Raso

Archaeological Sources

1. Twilight of Ancient India 29

1. Political Condition

The Last Imperial Rulers of Ancient India; The Fading Glory of Imperial Kanauj; Absence of Central Authority; (a) Northern India—Afghanistan and Punjab, Sind and Multan, Kashmir, Thanesar;

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(b) Eastern India—Bengal, Assam, Nepal; (c) Central and Western India; (d) Southern India.

2. **Arab Conquest of Sind and Multan**

3. **Pre-Muslim Society**

Absence of Creative Leadership, Rajput Culture, Social Organisation and Attitudes, Religious Beliefs and Practices, Indian Economy.

2. Ghaznavid Inroads 47

Kingdom of Ghazni, Jaipal's Encounter with Sabuktagin, The Myth of Undefended Frontier, *Mahmud of Ghazni* : Indian Invasions—Their Nature. Encounter with Jaipal, Subjugation of Bhatiya and Multan, Victory over Anandpal and Plunder of Nagarkot, Penetration into Rajputana, Annexation of Multan, Plunder of Thanesar, Defeat of Trilochanpal—End of Hindushahis, Plunder of Mathura and Kanauj, Campaign against Gwalior and Kalinjar, Plunder of Somnath; Objectives and Fulfilment; Effects of Mahmud's Invasions.

3. Northern India Between the Two Holocausts (1030-1175) 64

(a) **Muslim States of Northwestern India**

Lahore, Multan, Sind.

(b) **Delhi, Ajmer and Kanauj**

The Foundation of Modern Delhi ; Triangular Contest for Supremacy; The Imperial Chauhans : Prithvi Raj Chauhan; Kanauj.

(c) **Other Regional Kingdoms**

Gujarat and Malwa, Bundelkhand, Bihar and Bengal, Assam.

An Evaluation of the Political Condition

The Defunct Military System,

4. The Second Holocaust (1175-1205) 74

The Shansabani Dynasty of Ghur; Indian Campaigns of Muhammad Ghori—His Objectives;

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Conquest of Multan, Sind and the Punjab; Conflict with Prithvi Raj Chauhan III; First Battle of Tarain, Second Battle of Tarain, Conquest of Delhi, Penetration into the Gangetic Valley; The Conquests of Qutubuddin Aibek : Penetration into Bihar and Bengal; The Last Days of Muhammad Ghori, A Character Estimate; Causes of Success of the Turks.

5. Foundation of the Delhi Sultanate (1206-90) 86

1. Qutubuddin Aibek

The Slave Dynasty; Early Career of Aibek, Accession to the Throne, Aibek as a Ruler.

2. The Shamsi or the First Ilbari Dynasty

Shamsuddin Iltutmish—Real Founder of the Delhi Sultanate, Rival Turkish Nobles, Liquidation of Tajuddin Yaldoz, Defeat of Nasiruddin Qabacha, Mongols on the Northwestern Frontier, Reconquest of Multan and Sind, Reconquest of Bihar and Bengal, Conflict with the Rajputs, An Estimate.

3. Successors of Ilutmish

The Turkish Power-politics and the Problem of Succession; The Rule of "the Forty; Ruknuddin Firoze, Razia Begum, Behram Shah, Alauddin Masudshah, Nasiruddin Mahmud, Balban as Nasiruddin's Minister, Achievements of Balban as Minister.

4. The Second Ilbari Dynasty

Ghiasuddin Balban : Early Difficulties, Reorganisation of Army, Restoration of Law and Order, Balban's Theory of Kingship, Liquidation of 'the Forty', Suppression of Revolts in Bengal, Defence of Northwestern Frontier, An Estimate; Balban's Successors.

6. Khalji Imperialism 125

1. Jalaluddin Firoze Khalji

The Khalji Revolution, Early Career of Jalaluddin Khalji, Domestic Policy, Execution of Sidi Maula, Encounter with the Mongols, Campaigns against Rajputs, Alauddin's Expeditions, Murder of Jalaluddin Khalji, An Estimate.

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2. Alauddin Khalji

Early Career and Accession, Liquidation of the Jalali Family, Alauddin as an Autocrat : His Theory of Kingship, His Wild Aims.

Alauddin's Imperialism; Conquest of the Deccan, Encounter with the Mongols.

3. Government in Action Under Alauddin Khalji

Administrative Reforms, Fiscal Policy and Revenue Reforms, Price Control and Market Regulations ; An Estimate of Alauddin Khalji; End of the Khalji Dynasty.

7. Tughluq Dynasty 187

1. Ghiasuddin Tughluq Shah

Domestic Policy, Foreign Policy, An Estimate.

2. Muhammad bin Tughluq

The Mongol Invasion, Early Revolts, Transfer of the Capital, Introduction of Token Currency, The Proposed Khurasan Expedition, The Qurachil Expedition, Revenue Reforms, Taxation in the Doab, Rebellions and General Upsurge against the Rule of Muhammad bin Tughluq, An Estimate.

3. Firoze Shah Tughluq

The Elected Sultan, Nature of His Rule; Khan i Jahan Maqbul—the Prime Minister; Domestic Policy—Administrative Reforms and Public Welfare Activities, Foreign Policy and Defence.

8. Decline and Disintegration of the Sultanate 239

The Later Tughluqs

Invasion of Amir Timur; The Sayyads; The Lodhis : First Afghan Dynasty of Delhi, Bahlol Lodhi, Sikander Lodhi, Ibrahim Lodhi; Causes of Downfall of the Sultanate.

9. Northern India in the Fifteenth Century 259

General Characteristics of the Period; Bengal, Jaunpur, Malwa, Gujarat, Rajputana : Mewar; Marwar; Kashmir, Orissa.

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10. Bahmani and Vijayanagar Kingdoms 266

1. **The Bahmani Kingdom**
2. **The Vijayanagar Empire**
3. **Impact of Bahmani Rule on the Society and Culture of the Deccan**

Nature of the Bahmani Rule, Influx of Foreigners from Muslim countries, Conflict Between Foreigners and the 'Dakhinis', Evolution of the Bahmani or Indo-Muslim Culture of the Deccan, Development of Education and learning, Art and Architecture.

4. **Life and Condition of People in the Vijayanagar State**

Nature of the Vijayanagar State, Vijayanagar City and the Royalty, Glimpses of Socio-Cultural Life, Education and Learning, Art and Architecture, Wealth and Prosperity of Vijayanagar Empire, Advent of the Portuguese.

11. Administration of the Sultanate 292

1. **Political Theory of the Sultanate**

The Islamic Theory of State, Nature and Character of the Sultanate.

2. **Treatment of Non-Muslims in the Sultanate**
3. **Central Government**

The Sultan, The Ministers, Other Imperial Officers.

4. **Provincial and Local Governments**
5. **Fiscal Policy of the Sultanate**

The Iqta System.

6. **The Judiciary**
7. **The Ruling Elite**

The Nobility, The Ulema.

8. **Military Organisation**

12. Architectural Monuments of the Sultans 313

Building Activity of the Sultans—Its Rationale : The Islamic Architecture So-Called; Synthesis Between the Indigenous and Islamic Traditions, Difference Between Indigenous and Islamic Architecture.

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Three Phases of Development

The First Phase : Architectural Monuments of the Slave and Khalji Sultans.
The Second Phase: Buildings of the Tughluq Period.
The Third Phase : Countrywide Expansion of Indo-Islamic Architecture.

Conclusion 325

Appendices 327

I. Thirty-Two Sultans of Lahore and Delhi (1206-1526).

II. The Bahmani Sultans.

III. The Rulers of Vijayanagar.

Glossary 332

Index 341

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Introduction

Contemporary Sources of History

Indian Historiography—an Islamic Heritage

Ancient Indians had no taste for historiography; their scholars cared more for religious, spiritual and philosophical studies. Indian historiography is essentially an Islamic heritage; it were the muslim *ulama* and chroniclers who showed a keen sense of history[1] and wrote detailed accounts of the day-to-day happenings and political upheavals. Their primary object in doing so was, of course, the glory of Islam; they took pride in the military exploits of an *amir ul momnin* who attempted to transform *dar ul harab* into *dar ul Islam* by the conversion of 'infidels' to the faith. Even otherwise, they were men of this world who valued their material possessions and strove hard to multiply their worldly gains; this instinct helped them in keeping track of the events, past and present.

The muslim monarchs employed chroniclers, diarists and court historians who maintained profuse records of their activities, very often in systematic and chronological order, though usually exaggerated. The scholars produced books and poets composed *masnavis* on the dynastic, regional or general histories of the Islamic world; the writers penned biographical sketches of high and low and recorded historical anecdotes and chronological accounts of events, private or public; they wrote not only for literary fame, reward or edification of their patrons but also to satiate their intellectual hunger and inner urge for writing their observations and experiences. The

1. Ziauddin Barani, the greatest historian of early medieval India, writes about his own work, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi* (completed in 1358-59 A.D.), thus:

   I have taken great pains in writing this history . . . . if you examine it. . . as a chronicle of events, you will find in it the deeds of kings and military generals. If you search in this book, for the rules of government and administration, you will not find it without these. If you look into it for warnings and moral instructions to the kings and administrators, you will find these in abundance, and better depicted herein. . .I have made these few words (i.e., my narrative) extremely meaningful.

   —Free rendering of the passage into English by the author from the Persian text, edited by Sir Saiyyid Ahmad Khan; *Bibliotheca Indica*; Calcutta, 1862, p. 23.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

educated among the rulers and nobility wrote memoirs or maintained personal diaries. Historiography, therefore, flourished in all of its form during the *Sultanate period*; the age produced a number of professional historians, chroniclers and men of letters who bequeathed to posterity a rich treasure of historical literature.

The earlier literary records of the muslim chroniclers are found in Arabic, the language of the *Quran* and the Arab elite. With the establishment of Islam in Persia, there took place a revival of Persian nationalism within the muslim world; it resulted in the adoption of Persian language and culture by the turkish dynasties, founded mostly by the slave officers of the Persian monarchs. Consequently, along with the establishment of the turkish rule was planted the Persian tradition of historiography in India. Most of these literary records are thus found in Persian though some works in Arabic and other languages like Turki have also come down to us. These days we get translations in English and Indian languages of many an important work; the others are rapidly being translated and edited by the scholars.

The chroniclers of early medieval India were mostly turks or afghans of foreign pedigree who were interested primarily in recording the military and political exploits of their martial leaders, and the affairs at the courts of the sultans of Delhi or other regional states. They dealt mostly with matters which did not concern the general public; seldom did they pay attention to the socio-economic conditions of the country. The medieval system of education being 'theologically oriented', most of the writers traced the origin of every branch of knowledge to the *Quran* and the Prophet Muhammad. In order to use their material, therefore, it is essential to have 'a clear understanding of the mentality of the men'[2] who wrote it. They were not scientific historians; therefore, their works need to be handled with discretion and care. Their accounts have to be checked up and verified on the touchstone of modern research methodology before accepting them as historical facts. Of course, the military and political history is well-preserved in these literary sources. The study of numismatic evidence, monuments and representative specimens of art also helps in reconstructing the history of the times even though such sources are usually of a secondary importance tending to corroborate or confirm the literary evidence.

Contemporary Writers and Their Works

An introductory account of the contemporary writers and their works, which help us in the reconstruction of history of the early medieval period, may be given.

Chachnama

Chachnama is the most authentic primary source, hitherto discovered, on the history of the indigenous ruling dynasty of Sind

2. Mohibbul Hasan, Mohammad Habib and Nurul Hasan (ed.), *History of Medieval India*; Meenakshi, 1968. p. xi.

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on the eve of the Arab invasion in 711-12. The book was written in Arabic by an anonymous author, possibly a camp-follower of Muhammad bin Qasim, and entitled *Chachnama* after the name of the founder of the ruling house.[3] It gives a brief account of the *sudra* dynasty of Sind, on the death of whose last ruler Rai Sahasi[4] II, the throne was usurped by his *brahman* minister named Chach, son of Silaij[5], sometime in the fourth quarter of the seventh century. Chach married 'Subban Deo' (Devi), the widowed queen of his patron in order to strengthen his claim as sovereign. His son and successor Dahir ascended the throne in C. 708 AD; it was he who faced the Arab onslaught on Sind and perished in the struggle with the whole of his family.

Chachnama was translated into Persian[6] by Muhammad Ali bin Abu Bakr Kufi in the time of Nasiruddin Qabacha, a turkish slave officer of Muhammad Ghori, who had been appointed governor of Multan and Uchh (Sind) by his master.

Alberuni[7]

Alberuni (C. 972-1048), the first prominent muslim Indologist was one of the greatest intellectuals of the eleventh century. He was born of 'Iranian stock' in the territory of Khiva, then called Khwarizm.[8] He was a man of 'encyclopaedic learning' who distinguished himself in the multifarious disciplines of 'science and literature' of his day; he was a theologian, philosopher, logician, mathematician, astronomer, astrologer, geographer and physician—all rolled into one. He was a man of studious habits who remained constantly busy in reading and writing. Though brought up in the school of adversity, Alberuni exhibited no weakness for

3. Chach, seems to be a local or dialectical form of the word 'Jajja' which is the Prakrit form of the Sanskrit word 'Yayati'. Indian history has known some people who bore the name 'Jajja'. There was one Jajja, a brother of Jaypida, the king of Kashmir, who revolted and was killed by the latter.
   Similarly, Jajjala Deva was the name borne by two rulers of Ratnapur who belonged to the Kalacnuri dynasty and reigned in the twelfth century.—Shahpurshah Hormasji Hodivala, *Studies in Indo-Muslim History* : "A Critical Commentary on Elliot and Dowson's History of India as Told by Its Own Historians"; Bombay, 1939, p. 80.
4. Probably meant for Sahajiga or Sinbasena.—*ibid.*
5. Silaij for Shiladitya.—*ibid.*
6. Translated from Persian into English and edited by U.M. Daudpota, Hyderabad (Deccan), 1939.
7. Abu Raihan Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Bairuni al-Khwarizm. The surname is derived from Bairun, a suburb of Khwarizm.—K.A. Nizami in H.M. Elliot and John Dowson, *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians : The Muhammadan Period*; (abbreviated hereafter *E & D*), 8 vols; London, 1866-77: Aligarh, reprint, II, p. 777.
   For the biographical account of Alberuni, see *Abu Riham Alberuni* (Urdu); Anjumane Tarraqi e Urdu, Lucknow, 1915; also, *Al-Biruni Commemoration Volume*; Iran Society, Calcutta, 1951.
8. A *Khanate* of Turkistan in Central Asia, now part of the USSR.

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material acquisitions and comforts of life. He was the political counsellor of the Khwarizm Shah of the Mamuni dynasty in 1017 when his native country was invaded and conquered by Mahmud of Ghazni, Alberuni being one of them. He had already acquired fame as *munujjim*—'astrologer cum astronomer', well-versed in Greek as well as Indian systems; therefore, on his arrival in Ghazni, he was released immediately and allowed to lead his life as a free man. Mahmud's invasion of Khiva seems, however, to have had a deep impact on the mind of Alberuni. Once deprived of his native hearth and home, he refused to set up a new one in Ghazni. He did not enter the service of the state nor sought patronage of Sultan Mahmud *albeit* he had a casual contact with his court in the capacity of a *munujjim* and a learned sage.[9] Alberuni did not stay in Ghazni for long; in 1018-19, he accompanied the invading hordes of Mahmud to the Indo-Gangetic valley as a freelance observer. The invaders fought battles and indulged in loot and plunder but Alberuni just wandered about as a forlorn individual, in deep anguish and disgust; he simply observed the wanton destruction of Indian towns and temples, and the grievous injuries inflicted by man upon his own species in the satisfaction of his lust for power and wealth. Mahmud's armies returned to Ghazni and showed their appearance in India, in the same fiery mood, a couple of times again, but Alberuni stayed behind for a number of years. He travelled extensively in various parts of the country, studied the language, religion and philosophy of the hindus[10] and wrote the classic account of the country and its people in Arabic, entitled *Tarikh ul Hind*[11]; it was translated later into Persian.[12] It is an authentic primary source of information about the socio-religious condition of India of Mahmud of Ghazni's times. It gives a

9. Alberuni built no material assets during the lifetime of Mahmud of Ghazni though he could have amassed wealth simply by accepting the offerings and gifts from his admirers and the nobility of Ghazni. In his old age, however, he accepted the grant of a pension from Sultan Masud, the successor of Mahmud, so that he might continue to devote himself to literary pursuits.

10. Alberuni learned Sanskrit so that he might go to the sources of Hindu Thought; he read with delight the *Bhagavad Gita*; he studied *Samkhya* of Ka ila, the book of Patanjali and acquainted himself somewhat with the *Purana*;. . .For a muslim living in the days of Sultan Mahmud, almost under his roof, to study Sanskrit and things Hindu was no mean achievement; it demanded an exceptional spirit of determination and perseverance and not a little audacity.

—Al-Biruni Commemoration Volume; op. cit; pp. xv-xvi.

11. Full title : *Tahqiq* (or *Tahrir*) *mali li Hind min maqola fi l aql ao mar dhula*.

12. Translated from Persian into English and edited by Edward C Sachau, under the title—*Alberuni's India*: "An account of the religion, phi osophy, literature, geography, astronomy, customs, laws and astrology of India about 1030 A.D,"; 2 vols; (first published in London and Berlin, 1887-88; London, reprint, 1910), Indian reprint, S Chand, 1964; abridgement by Qeyamuddin Ahmad, National Book Trust, India, 1984.

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scholarly analysis of the social and religious institutions of the Hindus and throws light on their rich cultural heritage, including science and literature. The book presents 'a deep sociological study, characterised by a rare spirit of enquiry, modern scientific attitude and sympathetic insight'.[13] It also gives a dispassionate account of the weaknesses of the Indian character and the shortcomings of their socio-political order which led to their defeat and humiliation at the hands of the invaders.[14] Alberuni made extensive use of the Sanskrit literature from which he quotes chapter and verse in support of his contentions. He died in Ghazni at the age of seventy-seven.

Utbi[15]

Utbi, the celebrated author of *Tarikhi Yamin i* or *Kitab ul Yamini*, was attached to the personal staff of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni. He belonged to the family of Utba (in Persia) which provided a number of distinguished nobles and courtiers to the Samanid rulers. Obviously, Utbi had a first-hand knowledge of the character and activities of Sultan Mahmud and his officers, and was fully acquainted with the background story of his Indian campaigns, *albeit* he seems to have never accompanied Mahmud's convoy to India. His book is a fine piece of Arabic literature[16]; it gives the story of rise of the Ghaznavid power under Sabuktagin and describes the character and military exploits of Mahmud upto 1020 A.D. Utbi was ignorant of Indian languages and his knowledge of Indian topography was also very poor; as a result, his description of Mahmud's expeditions is full of mistakes. He was neither a court chronicler nor a professional historian; therefore, his book is deficient in dates and lacks chronological sequence. Being an orthodox *Sunni Mussalman*, Utbi applauds the achievements of Mahmud as *nasr amir ul momnin* who carried the banner of Islam to the land of the 'idol-worshippers' by the 'order of *Allah*; and the 'friends of *Khuda*' committed slaughter of the 'infidels' wherever they went.[17] The book was held in high esteem by the successors of Mahmud and the nobility of Ghazni; it was rendered into Persian

13. J.N. Sarkar in Muhibbul Hasan, *Historians of Medieval India*; op. cit; p. 167.

14. Alberuni has to say the following about his work:
This book is not a polemical one. I shall not produce the arguments of our antagonists in order to refute such of them as I believe to be in the wrong. My book is nothing but a simple historic record of facts.
—*Alberuni's India* (Sachau), I, p. 7.

15. Full name : Abu Nasr Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Jabbar ul'Utbi.

16. Pers. trs. by Abul Sharaf Jarbazkani in 1205-6 A.D; edited by Ashraf Ali and Sprenger, Delhi, 1847; Eng. trs. from Persian by James Reynolds, Oriental Translation Fund, London, 1858; extracts, *E & D*, II, pp. 14-52.

17. *E & D*, II, pp. 25, 29, 36.

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by a number of contemporary writers.[18] It was popular with the historiographers of the Mughal period who freely quoted from it.

Abul Fazl Baihaqi

Abul Fazl Baihaqi (c. 996-1077), was an official[19] of Sultan Masud, the successor of Mahmud of Ghazni; he was closely associated with the Ghaznavid court and its nobility. He wrote a ten-volume comprehensive history of the Ghaznavid rulers upto 1059 A.D., entitled *Tarikh i Baihaqi* or *Mujalladad i Baihaqi*[20] (volumes of Baihaqi). The Mughal historians made an extensive use of it but a major part of the original work has not been discovered so far.[21] Its component volumes were captioned *Tarikh us Sabuktagin*,[22] *Tajul Futuh* (history of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni) and *Tarikh i Masudi* (history of Sultan Masud) etc.

Baihaqi's account of Sabuktagin is not very trustworthy; it has 'the appearance of a gossiping memoir'. Nevertheless, he gives an original and refreshing history of the reign of his own patron, Sultan Masud. He draws a pen-portrait of the Sultan's court and character sketches of his nobles. The description of Masud's campaign in Ghur constitutes a rare source of information regarding the socio-political condition of that region before the rise of the Shansabanis (the ruling house of Ghur and Muhammad Ghori). The book, though comprehensive, seems to have been scribbled in a hurry in colloquial Persian which contains broken sentences, grammatical mistakes and obscure words; the subject-matter is not well arranged nor does the author adhere to the chronological narration of events.

Hasan Nizami

Hasan Nizami's *Tajul Ma'asir*[23]—'The Crown of Exploits' deals primarily with the history of Qutbuddin Aibek. The author was an immigrant from Khurasan; he was born at Nishapur in an

18. One such work, entitled *Tarjuma i Yamini*, by Abul Sharaf Jarbazkani, made in 1205-6, was translated into English by James Reynolds, Oriental Translation Fund, London, 1858; extracts, *E & D*, II, pp. 14-52.
19. A secretary in the *Diwan ur Rasail*.
20. In this introduction to the tenth volume, Baihaqi writes:
. . .historical knowledge can only be obtained with difficulty, either by travelling round the world and undergoing trouble or searching in trustworthy books and ascertaining the real occurrences from them . . .
—*E & D*, II, pp. 55.
21. Volumes, 7, 8, 9 and fractions of volumes 6 and 10 were edited and reproduced in *Bibliotheca Indica* under the supervision of Major W.N. Lees and his Indian staff; for extracts, see *E & D*, II, pp. 53-153.
22. Also entitled, *Tarikh i Al i Sabuktagin* (or *Tarikh i Nasiri*, viz., that of Nasiruddin Sabuktagin), edited by W.H. Morley, *Bibliotheca Indica*, Calcutta, 1861-62.
23. *E & D*, II, pp. 202-40.

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aristocratic family of repute.[24] He writes that he 'never dreamt of travelling abroad' until the troubles of his native country 'compelled him to seek a residence elsewhere.'[25] He came to Ghazni, made acquaintances with the courtiers of Sultan Muhammad Ghori and soon migrated to Delhi. He joined service under Qutbuddin Aibek, then the viceroy of northern India on behalf of Muhammad Ghori. Hasan Nizami took up the writing of this book on the orders of Aibek in 1205. After the death of Muhammad Ghori, Aibek became an independent ruler of northern India; it naturally added to the social status of the author and enhanced the value of his official assignment. The narrative commences from the years 1191-92 when Muhammad Ghori invaded India as a wounded tiger, to avenge his defeat suffered previously at the hands of Prithvi Raj III, the Chauhan ruler of Delhi and Ajmer, and fought the second battle of Tarain. The author gives in detail the military exploits of Aibek from 1192 to 1206 though his achievements as independent ruler (1206-10) find mention in bare outlines, in a single chapter. The author does not mention Aram Shah but describes the events of Iltutmish's reign upto 1217.

Tajul Ma'asir is a marvellous production in more than one respect. It is the first historical narrative which deals with the beginning of the muslim rule in India; it thus untags the history of the Delhi sultanate from that of Ghazni, Central Asia or Islam, the usual starting points of many other contemporary chronicles. Its medium of expression is a unique mixture of Arabic and Persian languages, in poetry as well as prose. The author starts in Arabic and, all of a sudden, switches over to Persian while giving details of certain events, and again reverts to Arabic at his convenience; a learned scholar and literary wizard, Hasan Nizami displays his command over both the languages, his expression is rich in vocabulary and juicy phrases. Similarly, the author was a good poet who could compose verses in both the languages with equal competence, therefore, his prose passages are interspersed with fine pieces of poetry which are of literary merit in their own right. The book comprises twelve thousand lines of which above seven thousand are in verse, both Arabic and Persian. *Tajul Ma'asir* has some more unique features to its credit; it is partly history and partly fiction: in the midst of the historical narrative, the author starts giving fantastic accounts of certain other subjects or characters in an eloquent style. Not only this, Hasan Nizami introduces, in the style of *Panchtantra* literature of ancient India, a subordinate series of descriptions (*sifats*) within one leading subject, which included qualities of mirrors, rules of chess, natural elements,

24. His father was probably Abul Hasan Nizami Aruzi of Samarqand. —Hasan Askari, in Mohibbul Hasan, *Historians of Medieval India*; op. cit; p. 169.
25. *E & D*, II, pp. 210-12. The oldest known Ms. of the book is in Istanbul; it is dated 694 AH (1295 A.D.).

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seasons, fruits, flowers and what not. To a man of literature, with proficiency in Arabic and Persian, the book offers interesting reading; no wonder, it was very popular in the literary circles of early medieval India.

Minhajus Siraj

Minhajus Siraj belonged to an aristocratic family of Central Asia; he was related from his mother's side to the ruling house of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni.[26] His father was attached to the 'army of Hindustan' under Muhammad Ghori as *qazi* and spiritual guide. Minhaj himself was a distinguished scholar of Islamic theology (*manqul*) and jurisprudence (*fiqh*); he received appointment as principal of the Firozi *madrassah* at Uchh in 1227 from Nasiruddin Qabacha who was then in revolt against Delhi. The very next year, Uchh was recovered by the royal army, led by Sultan Iltutmish; Minhajus Siraj accompanied his train to Delhi and was patronised by the sultan. Four years later, Gwalior was reconquered by Iltutmish from the Rajputs and Minhaj was appointed its *qazi* and *sadr*—justice of peace and head of the ecclesiastical establishment. In 1235, we find him as the chief *qazi* of Delhi. On the deposition of Sultan Behram Shah (1240-42), Minhaj resigned the post and migrated to Bengal whose ruler had declared himself independent of Delhi. He stayed at Lakhnauti (ex-Gaur) for over two years as courtier of the regional ruler; thereafter, he returned to Delhi and was immediately offered the principalship of the Nasiriya *madrassah*. Minhaj became the chief *qazi* and *sadr i jahan* of the state under Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud (1246-66); he enjoyed the confidence of the sultan and his *malik naib* (deputy) Balban.

Minhajus Siraj was an historian *par excellence*. He produced an elaborate history of the Islamic world in twenty-three small but compact volumes or books (*majiladad*), entitled *Tabaqat i Nasiri*,[27] after his royal patron. He starts with the account (volume I) of the earlier prophets and ancestors of Muhammad, leading to the birth of Islam. Each of his subsequent books is devoted to the history of the Caliphs and Muslim rulers of various countries and periods. Volume XI gives the history of Ghaznavids from Sabuktagin to the death of Khusrau Malik (1201 A.D.); volume XVII deals with the Shansabani sultans of Ghur from the origin of the family to 1215 when its twenty-second and the last ruler Alauddin

26. His great great grandfather Imam Abdul Khalid hailed from Juzjan, situated between Merv and Balkh; he married a daughter of Sultan Ibrahim of Ghazni (1055-99).

27. The portions of the *Tabaqat i Nasiri* which relate to India (books 11,17 to 22) were printed in the *Bibliotheca Indica* under the superintendence of Major W.N. Lees in a separate volume of 450 pages, 1863-64.
—Eng. trs. by H.G. Raverty, *Bib. Indica*. 1881; extracts, *E & D*, II, pp. 256-379.

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surrendered the town of Firoze Koh to Muhammad Khwarizm Shah. Book XIX gives an account of the Shansabani sultans of Ghazni from the period of Saifuddin Suri who defeated Behram Shah Ghazni, to that of Qutbuddin Aibek who expelled Tajuddin Yaldoz from Ghazni for a shortwhile. Book XX gives the history of Aibek and his son Aram Shah, Nasiruddin Qabacha, Bahauddin Tughril and the first four rulers of Lakhnauti, ending with Husanuddin Ghiasuddin who was defeated and slain by Iltutmish in 1226. Book XXI records the history of the sultans of Delhi from Iltutmish to Nasiruddin Mahmud; it carries the narrative to 1259; the fifteenth year of Nasiruddin's reign. Book XXII contains the biographical sketches of the eminent courtiers, military generals, provincial governors and other men of repute of the sultanate period from 1227 to the author's own time, ending with the early history of Balban, then the *wazir* and *mailk naib* of Nasiruddin Mahmud.

Book XXIII of the *Tabaqat i Nasiri* preserves a valuable record of the Mongol menace in central Asia, including India; it makes references to Chengiz Khan and his descendants, including Chaghatai Khan, Batu Khan, Mangu Khan, Halaku Khan, etc., right upto 1259.

Tabaqat i Nasiri is written in a simple, straightforward and accurate language. By its very nature, the work is brief; the author does not resort to useless discussions or side-tracking of the main issues. It can be said to his credit that his judicial profession and true historian's spirit carries a deep imprint on the methodology and contents of the book. Obviously, Minhaj has done a lot of labour in collecting the material from all the available sources and devoted many years in hammering it into shape. He often quotes or refers to the authority for the facts given by him. *Tabaqat i Nasiri* was well-known to the later medieval historians though the Mughal emperors did not encourage its wide circulation because, in the twenty-third volume, the author had done some plain speaking about the mongol marauders and the destruction wrought by them in Central Asia; the atrocities committed by them on the muslims were exposed, particularly, by Minhaj.

Amir Khusrau

Amir Khusrau (c. 1252-1325) was not a professional historian nor did he claim to be one, *albeit* he has to his credit about half a dozen historical works, including prose chronicles and *masnavis* (poetic compositions) like *Qiranus Sa'adain*, *Miftahul Futuh*, *Khazainul Futuh*, *Dewal Rani Khizr Khani*, *Nuh Sipihr* and *Tughluq Nama*. A born poet and genius as a writer, Amir Khusrau was the first and by far the most prominent 'representative of Indo-Muslim culture'[28] of early medieval India. He adorned the courts of all

28. For his life-history and works refer to Mirza Muhammad Wahid, *Life*

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the sultans from Balban to Ghiasuddin Tughluq as the poet laureate; he was popularly known as *Tuti e Hind*—'the parrot of India'. He is said to have composed four lakhs of couplets in Persian and Hindavi or Delhvi (later Urdu) language and wrote as many as ninety-two separate works on literature which included the above-mentioned historical works, five *divans* (collections of poetic compositions), about a dozen novels, four collections of Shaikh Nizamuddin's *sufi* philosophy and sayings, besides numerous treatises, in prose as well as poetry, on theology, philosophy, art, literary criticism and various cultural themes. He was the first Muslim poet who made liberal use of Hindi words and adopted Indian poetic imagery and themes.

Qiran us Sa'adain[29] of Amir Khusrau is an historical *masnavi* which gives an eye-witness account of the meeting that took place in Oudh between Sultan Kaiqubad and his father Bughra Khan, the governor of Bengal; the poet laureate had accompanied the young sultan's entourage. It throws a flood of light on the political condition, the court atmosphere and the socio-cultural life of the period.

Miftahul Futuh[30] contains an account of the military campaigns of Jalaluddin Khalji in poetry.

Khazainul Futuh[31] or *Tarikh i Ilahi* is an historiographical composition in prose which describes the conquests and other achievements of Alauddin Khalji. His military campaigns in Deccan have been given in detail. The description of Mongol invasions on India and the strong policy adopted by Alauddin to combat them, being based on first-hand knowledge, is of great historical value.

The *masnavi*, entitled Ashiqa or *Dewal Rani Khizr Khani*[32] narrates the romantic story of Khizr Khan, son of Alauddin Khalji and Dewal Rani, the daughter of Rana Karan of Gujarat. It also makes a brief reference to the military expeditions of Alauddin Khalji.

The poetic composition of *Nuh Sipihr*[33] deals with the reign of

and Works of Amir Khusrau, Idarah-i Adabyiat-i Delhi, 1974, Arash Malsiani, *Amir Khusrau, Ahad. Fan Aur Shakhsiyat* (Urdu), Nakodar, 1974; Saiyid Ghulam Samnani, *Amir Khusrau* (National Biographical Series, N.B.T., New Delhi; A. Ansari and Abul Faiz Sahr (ed.), *Khusrau Shanasi* (Urdu), N.B.T., New Delhi, 1975.

29. Edited by Mohammad Ismail, Aligarh, 1918.
30. Edited by Yasin Khan Niazi, Oriental College Magazine, 1936-37; for extracts, see *E & D*, III, pp. 534-43.
31. Edited by S. Moinul Haq, Aligarh, 1927; also by M Wahid Mirza, Calcutta, 1953; English trs. by M. Habib, entitled, *The Campaigns of Alauddin Khalji*; Madras, 1931; extracts *E & D*, III, pp. 67-92.
32. Edited by Mohammad Ismail, Aligarh, 1918.
33. *E & D*, III, pp. 557-65.

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Mubarak Shah Khalji, the unworthy and incompetent successor of Alauddin Khalji.

Tughluq Nama,[34] also an historical *masnavi*, was composed by Amir Khusrau to commemorate the victory of Ghiasuddin Tughluq over Khusrau Khan (1320 A.D.), leading to the establishment of a new ruling dynasty. It is a valuable primary source of history for the reign of Ghiasuddin Tughluq.

These works were prepared by Amir Khusrau either under the direction of the reigning monarchs or for presentation to them. His 'primary concern' in their composition, was 'to demonstrate his literary ability and again a lasting reputation, and also to get reward for his literary performances.'[35] Obviously, they present only the bright side of the picture; the writer applauds the achievements of his patrons in hyperbolic terms and glosses over their shortcomings and failures. The works suffer generally from factual and topographical errors and show lack of chronological sequence. The author gives fanciful accounts of some very insignificant happenings by implying verbose style, poetic imageries and literary art forms. Amir Khusrau cannot be called 'a deliberate lier' *albeit* he 'omitted what he did not want to express,'[36] he does not distort the facts as was done by Barani in the case of Muhammad bin Tughluq.

In addition to the above, one of Amir Khusrau's compilations entitled, *Ijaz i Khusravi*,[37] is a massive collection of diverse types of documents, personal letters and treatises written by him to his friends or masters or just to satisfy his literary and intellectual hunger. Some of these are the official documents, like the *Fathanama* of Lakhnauti, drafted by him on the orders of the sultans, which are of immense historical importance. In general the contents of *Ijaz i Khusravi* constitute an invaluable source of study for the socio-cultural history of the times. As a matter of fact, Amir Khusrau's writings are a treasure-house of knowledge and information regarding the life and conditions of the people of Hindustan for full four decades when the Sultanate of Delhi was at the apex of its glory.

Ziauddin Barani

Ziauddin Barani (b. 1285 A.D.), the celebrated author of *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*, has been rated the greatest of all the

34. Edited by Hashim Faridabadi, Aurangabad, 1933.
35. Hasan Askari in Mohibbul Hasan, *Historians of Medieval India*; loc. cit; pp. 34-35.
36. *ibid*; p. 26. Askari opines that Amir Khusrau did not 'always write in a straightforward manner and seldom expressed his real sentiments lest that might offend and annoy those who were at the helm of affairs. He wrote with restraint about those people whom he disliked for their character and conduct'. *ibid*; p. 34.
37. 5 vols; Lucknow, 1876.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

contemporary historians of the early medieval India. He belonged to an aristocratic family of the earliest turkish immigrants to India. His maternal grandfather was a distinguished noble of Balban, and his father Muwaidul Mulk was on the personal staff of prince Arkali Khan, the second son of Jalaluddin Khalji. Barani's uncle Alaul Mulk was a friend of Alauddin Khalji; he was the right-hand man of the latter in planning the Deogiri expedition and the conspiracy to murder Jalaluddin. After Alauddin's usurpation of the throne, Alaul Mulk was rewarded immediately with the governorship of Kara and Oudh; soon after, he was invited to Delhi to be the chief counsellor of the sultan and *kotwal* of the capital. Barani was brought up in the capital in an affluent environment and highly aristocratic traditions of the day; he joined the imperial court under Muhammad bin Tughluq and enjoyed his patronage for seventeen long years. The sultan held him in high esteem as an intellectual.

Barani was a close associate of Amir Khusrau and rubbed shoulders with the highest of the nobility in the sultanate; he was extremely conscious of his superior social status. To his misfortune, he fell a victim to a sudden change in the court-politics. Muhammad bin Tughluq died childless at Thatta (Sind), where he had gone to suppress a revolt. When the news of his death reached the capital, Khwaja Jahan, who ran the central administration in the absence of the sultan, raised a young boy to the throne without knowing the fact that Firoze Tughluq (a cousin of Muhammad bin Tughluq) had already been declared sultan by the royal entourage and the army officers in Sind. The Khwaja and his associates lost their lives for this misadventure; and Barani, who had extended moral support to them, was also thrown into the prison. Those who were jealous of Barani, wanted him to be hanged but his life was spared by the personal intervention of Sultan Firoze Tughluq. Barani lost, however, the royal patronage and suffered the confiscation of his assets and properties. He became a pauper overnight; 'disowned by friends, neglected by relatives and despised by enemies,'[38] he died a broken-hearted man in the *khanqah* of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya.[39]

Barani's *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*[40] preserves the history of the Delhi sultanate for full one century, from 1259 to 1352. The author started his work just where Minhajus Siraj had left it;[41] his

38. K.A. Nizami in Mohibbul Hasan, *Historians of Medieval India*; loc. cit; p. 42.

39. "He was reduced to such extreme poverty that no more costly shroud than a piece of coarse matting could be furnished for the funeral obsequies"—Lees quoted in *E & D*, III, p. 96.

40. Edited by S.A. Khan, *Bib. Indica*; Calcutta, 1860; Eng. trs. by Muhammad Habib, Aligarh; extracts, *E & D*, III, pp. 93-268.

41. "If I copy what this venerable and illustrious author (Minhaj) has written, those who have read his history will derive no advantage from

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

narrative is thus a continuation of the *Tabaqat i Nasiri*; it gives the history of nine rulers from Balban to Firoze Shah Tughluq, upto the sixth year of his reign. Barani's write-up excluding the narrative of Firoze Tughluq, constitutes a standard work of history[42] which establishes his reputation as premier historian of his age, the master of his craft who surpasses even Minhaj whom he declares to be his torch-bearer in the pursuit of this discipline.

Barani's description of Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign is 'unfair'; he distorted the facts 'deliberately' and wrote with a biased mind. Similarly, his narrative of Firoze Tughlug's reign was prepared under duress; having been disgraced by the royal court and dubbed an enemy of the reigning monarch by his rivals, Barani set aside his duties as a historian and, instead, resorted to the flattery of the sultan in order to pacify his wrath. The title of the work, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*, is in fact, a misnomer; Barani's true worth as scientific historian is known not by what he writes about Muhammad bin Tughluq or Firoze Tughluq but the preceding sultans.

Of course, Barani is deficient in dates; at certain places he gives an analysis of the events and political developments out of chronological order but it might have been because of the fact that he wrote the book just from his memory during the last year of his wretched living when he had no benefit of notes or other references to verify and correct himself. What is praiseworthy about him is the fact that his brain was the treasure-house of historical knowledge from which he produced so much that was so valuable.

Barani's account is not descriptive but analytical and critical; he does not bother about the details; instead, he takes up the political and administrative issues as a 'compact whole' and through a manner of scientific presentation, reveals the characteristics of the period to which they belong. Even his minor comments on the characters and cryptic references to the events throw a flood of light on the working of the minds of the rulers, and prides and prejudices of the age. In spite of his subjective approach, which involved his religious outlook, class consciousness, aristocratic complexion and his subsequent personal discomfiture, Barani reveals

mine; and if I state anything contrary to the master's writings or abridge or amplify his statements, it will be considered disrespectful and rash. In addition to which I should raise doubts and difficulties in the minds of his (Minhaj's) readers''—Barani in *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*, *E & D*, III, p, 93.

The statement shows a sentimental weakness of the author, not befitting a mature historian.

42. For Barani 'history was not a record or a chronicle or a story; it was very definitely a science—the science of the social order and its basis was not religion or tradition but observation and experience'.

—Mohammad Habib and Mrs (Dr) Afsar Khan, *The Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate* (being the English trs. of *Fatawa i Jahandari* of Barani); Kitab Mahal, Allahabad, p. 125.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

the true historian in him; and those who understand his personal shortcomings can evaluate and appreciate his work much better.[43]

Barani's *Fatawa i Jahandari*[44] is a complementary volume to the *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*. In this book, the author recapitulates and further elaborates the political philosophy of the sultanate on the basis of his earlier narrative. He explains in historical perspective how the original Islamic theory of kingship and the foreign political institutions, adopted by the turkish rulers of Delhi, underwent radical changes in the Indian setting over the passage of two centuries. The book deals with subjects like powers and functions of the crown, privileges of the nobility, the doctrine of safety of the state, law and order problems, crime and punishment, religion and politics, the role of the army and the intelligence services of the sultans.

Feroze Tughluq's Autobiography

Sultan Firoze Shah Tughluq has left a brochure of thirty-two pages in autobiographical writing, called *Futuhat i Firoze Shahi*;[45] it gives a brief summary of his military campaigns, some of which failed to produce the desired results. The sultan does not attempt to hide the truth or give a clever explanation of their failure but shows the true working of his mind in handling the state affairs. The book 'exhibits the humane and generous spirit' of Firoze 'in a pleasing tone'; it explains the concept of his kingly duties which was based on religious, humanitarian and moral obligations.[46]

Shams i Siraj Afif

Shams i Siraj Afif[47] (b. 1354 A.D.) belonged to Abohar (Punjab), the native town of Sultan Firoze Tughluq's Bhatti

43. In the words of K.A. Nizami,
Barani is one of those historians who refuse to enlighten a reader unless he has thoroughly familiarised himself with the basic categories of his thought and the chief characteristics of his personality. The *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi* is, indeed, for one who knows Ziauddin Barani.
—Mohibbul Hasan, *Historians of Medieval India*, op. cit., p. 50.

44. *Supra*, fn 40.

45. Edited by N.B. Roy, *JRASB*, VII, 1941; by S.P. Rashid, Aligarh, 1954; edited also with Urdu trs. and notes by M.A. Chaghatai, Poona, 1941.
E & D, III, pp. 374-88, carries the complete translation of the treatise.

46. Originally, the document was inscribed on a dome of the Friday mosque of Firozabad, on the pattern of Ashoka's inscriptions; it was addressed to *sunni* Muslim congregation. Firoze Tughluq seems to have been fascinated by Ashoka's pillars, two of which were brought by him from Topra (situated about eleven kilometres south west of Jagadhri) and Meerut respectively, to Delhi and had them installed there.

47. As per his own statement, Afif was twelve years old when Firoze Tughluq
—*Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; *E & D*, III, p. 351.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

mother. The great grandfather of Afif has been a personal friend of Ghiasuddin Tughluq before the latter acquired the throne. Afif's ancestors were, therefore closely associated with the Tughluq rulers; he himself adorned the court of Firoze Tughluq as a scholar though he never accepted an official employment. He held learned discourses with the sultan and used to accompany him on hunting expeditions. He is said to have written three books on the life-history, military expeditions and administrative achievements of each of the three Tughluq rulers—Ghiasuddin, Muhammad bin Tughluq and Firoze Tughluq, of which only the one, entitled, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*,[48] has survived. It is devoted exclusively to the reign of Firoze Tughluq and constitutes the most accurate and authentic contemporary account of his times. The book was written by Afif long after the death of the sultan when Delhi had been invaded and put to plunder by Amir Timur. He wrote, in the true spirit of a historian and biographer, the reminiscences of the glorious past for the edification and benefit of posterity, without any self-interest, prejudice or reflexes. In compact and well-written ninety chapters of the book, the author gives, in a simple and matter-of-fact narrative, not only the political and military activities of Firoze Tughluq but also his administrative policy with special reference to the public welfare activities. From the study of this book, we get the impression that Firoze Tughluq was really the forerunner of Sher Shah Suri and Akbar in the matter of utilising state resources for the public good. The book is unique in the sense that it also describes the life and condition of the people at large, the one aspect which has usually been ignored by contemporary writers. According to Elliot, this work 'gives us altogether a better view of the internal condition of India under a Mohammadan sovereign than is presented to us in any other work, except the *Ayin i Akbari*.'[49]

Amir Timuri's Autobiography

Amir Timur (1334-1405)—'the scourge of God on earth', who took Delhi by storm in 1398-99 has also left an autobiographical account of his exploits in the *Tuzuk i Timuri* or *Malfuzat i Timuri*.[50] It is said to have been written originally in Chaghatai[51] (Turki) which was translated into Persian during the reign of Shah Jahan by Abu Talib Husaini. For a long time, there was a heated controversy regarding its authenticity[52] among the modern historians

48. Edited by Wilayat Husain, *Bibliotheca Indica*, Çalcutta, 1981; for extracts, see *E & D*, III, pp. 269-373.
49. *E & D*, II, p. 270.
50. Translated from Persian into English by Major Stewart, Oriental Translation Fund, 1830; for extracts, see *E & D*, III, pp 389-477.
51. Original turkish version has not yet been found by the modern world.
52. Sachau dubbed it a fabrication, made by Abu Talib to win favours and reward from the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan. He writes:

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

which has now been laid to rest and the work is treated as 'genuine'. The book was not written by Timur himself; instead, he got it written under his personal direction and supervision. Its language is simple and it gives the factual information in plain and straightforward manner. The crude facts relating to Timur's destructive activities are given without any attempt to hide the real motives of 'the blood-thirsty monster'; they are explained in the first person.

Thirty years after the death of Timur, Maulana Yazdi[53], a courtier of the Timuri house, wrote an account of his military exploits in a book, entitled *Zafarnama*.[54] For its preparation, Yazdi made use of all the available sources, including Timur's memoirs. He states clearly that these memoirs were prepared under the personal direction of Timur; were read out in his presence and received the 'impress of his approval'. Yazdi's account is nearly a reproduction of *Tuzuk i Timuri* with the difference that the author has used a more polished and flowery language and attempted to hide, behind his literary style, the naked and brute force of Timur's actions.

Yahya bin Ahmad Sirhindi

Tarikh i Mubarak Shahi[55] of Yahya bin Ahmad Sirhindi is the only contemporary source, discovered so far, on the history of the Sayyad dynasty (1414-51). The author wrote it with the express object of recording the achievements of his patron, Sultan Mubarak Shah (1421-34) and his predecessors. He tells us nothing about himself not even the official designation or status occupied by him in the court. The book begins with the rise of the Ghori dynasty and the conquest of northern India by the turks. It gives a brief account of the earlier sultans of Delhi but the bulk of the narrative is devoted exclusively to the description of military and political activities of the Sayyad rulers. The story comes to an end abruptly in 1434-35 when Sayyad Muhammad was on the throne. The author had consulted 'various histories' for writing the earlier part of the book while the account of the Sayyads was based upon his

> The reader will be astonished to learn how that monster—who knew so well how to sack and burn cities, to slaughter hundreds of thousands of his fellow-creatures, to lay waste almost one-half of the then civilised world in a marvellously short time—in his leisure hours received inspirations from Clio; that *he*, in short, was a Tatar Caesar. Even admitting that he knew how to write, we cannot believe in his authorship of the book in question.
>
> —Sachau's review of *E & D*, III, (original edition), quoted in *E & D*, III, Susil Gupta reprint, Calcutta, 1958, p 42.

53. Yazdi wrote the book in 1424 A.D,; he died in 1446.

54. *E & D*, III, pp. 478-522.

55. Original Ms. runs into 263 pages of 22 lines in a page; edited by M. Hidayat Hosain, *Bib. Indica*, 1931; extracts, *E & D*, IV, pp. 68-88.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

'trustworthy information and personal knowledge'. Elliot declares Yahya to be 'a careful and apparently an honest chronicler.[56]' Like a typical medieval Indian writer, Yahya visualises the divine will in shaping the fortunes of Islam in India and ends the account of each monarch with the phrase 'God alone knows the truth.' *Tarikh i Mubarak Shahi* was consulted and duly acknowledged by the historiographers of the Mughal period, including Nizamuddin Ahmad, Badauni and Firishta.

Khwajah Abdullah Malik Isami

Khwaja Abdullah Malik Isami (b. 1311 A.D.), a scholar and poet of the fourteenth century, wrote an historical *masnavi*, *Futuhus Salatin*[57] in 1349-50, on the turkish rule in India from the Ghaznavids to Muhammad bin Tughluq. He belonged to an aristocratic family of turkish immigrants[58] who had long associations with the earliest sultans of Delhi. Isami was about sixteen years old when he migrated to Daulatabad during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq. He was an eternal bachelor who was said to have suffered considerable hardships in Deccan and lived a wretched and lonely life when Alauddin Hasan, the founder of the Bahmani kingdom, extended his patronage to him. *Futuhus Salatin* was composed by him in his old age to secure the goodwill of his new patron; it makes a selective use of the material then available, but gives it an original form and a rhythm of his own. The author gives in outline the history of the sultans of Delhi and proceeds to explain in detail the circumstances which led to the foundation of the Bahmani kingdom. He narrates the achievements of Alauddin Hasan in hyperbolic terms, giving free vent to the flights of his poetic imagination. Isami's approach to Muhammad bin Tughluq is highly subjective; he has painted the sultan in the darkest shade as the 'wisest fool' of the Islamic world. The book is, however, of special merit to the modern historians of early medieval history in one respect; it is the only contemporary source which records the events of the closing years (1259-66) of sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud's reign which had been left out by Minhajus Siraj; thus it fills up a gap between the narratives of *Tabaqat i Nasiri* of Minhaj and *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi* of Barani. On the whole, *Futuhus Salatin* is not a critical history; it suffers from factual mistakes and omissions of important events. According to the author, the course of history is determined by pre-ordained divine

56. *E & D*, IV, p. 6.

57. Edited by Agha Mahdi Husain, Agra, 1938; and by A.S. Usha, Madras, 1950.

58. One of his ancestors, Fakhr Malik Isami, came to India from Baghdad in the time of Iltutmish. Since then his family had been in the service of the sultans of Delhi; Isami's grandfather A'izzuddin was the chief huntsman (*sar i lashkar*) of Balban.

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pattern and fate plays its invisible role in making or marring the fortunes of the kings and their families.

Mir Khwand

Mir Khwand,[59] also known as Mirkhond (b. 1433 A.D.), was an Arab whose parents had migrated to Herat, then the capital of Khurasan. He was devoted to literary pursuits and enjoyed the patronage of Ali Shir, himself a distinguished scholar and minister of the Khurasan ruler. He wrote the history of central Asia, entitled, *Rauzat us Safa*[60]—'the Garden of Purity', in two volumes. Divided into seven books, the work gives a detailed treatment to the career and achievements of Chengiz Khan, Amir Timur and their descendants. The author says that he had made use of nineteen Arabic and twenty-two Persian histories in the preparations of this work; his book forms the basis of many other literary works of central Asian writers.

Khondamir

Khondamir was the son of Mirkhond's daughter; his original name was Ghiasuddin. Born at Herat in 1475, he grew up to be a brilliant scholar who developed a special taste for historiography. Khondamir was given charge of his personal library by Ali Shir, the patron of his maternal grandfather. He produced a standard work on the history of the muslim world, entited, *Khulasat ul Akhbar*[61] in his early twenties; as per his own statement, Khondamir had devoted six years in the preparation of this book.

Khondamir took up service under Sultan Baduiz Zaman. the last descendant of Amir Timur in Khurasan; he received appointment as chief *qazi* and *sadr*, in charge of the ecclesiastical affairs. In 1507-8 Khurasan was conquered by the Uzbeks and Khondamir retired to a small village called Basht in Ghorjistan which lay on the upper course of the Merghab in the vicinity of Ghur.[62] Unmindful of the political upheavals, Khondamir carried on the literary pursuits and produced a number of works including one *Dastur ul Wuzara*.[63]

Khondamir wrote yet another comprehensive history of the Islamic world under the title *Habibus Siyar*[64] between 1521-28.

59. Muhammad bin Khwand Shah *alias* Mir Khwand.
60. Full title : *Rauzat us Safa fi Sirat al Ambiyla wa'l Muluk wa'l Khulafa*; Eng. trs. by E. Rehatsek, Oriental Translation Fund, New Series, London, 1891-93; extracts, *E & D*, IV, pp. 127-40.
61. *E & D*, IV, pp. 141-47.
62. Hodivala, *Studies in Indo-Muslim History*, *op. cit*; p. 424.
63. *E & D*, IV, pp. 148-53.
64. *E & D*, IV, pp. 154-212. The original Ms. contains 2318 pages with twenty lines to a page.

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This book was under preparation when Khondamir migrated to India soon after the establishment of the Mughal rule. He was introduced to Babar at Agra; the latter was highly impressed by Khondamir's scholarship. He was immediately granted a handsome allowance and permitted to carry on his literary activities at his leisure. Khondamir accompanied the train of Babar during his military campaigns and completed the *Habibus Siyar* somewhere on the banks of the Ganges. The book comprises an introduction, three volumes, each of which is further subdivided into four chapters, and a conclusion. It gives an account of the rule of the sultans of Delhi, excluding the Tughluqs.[65]

As regards the *Khulasat ul Akhbar*, it was originally intended to carry the history of the muslim world upto 1471 only; the author revised the scope of the book while in India and extended the account up to 1528. As it finally emerged, the work comprises an introduction, ten volumes and a conclusion; the chapters relating to the Ghaznavids, the Ghurids and the sultans of Delhi are contained in the eighth volume while some of the events relating to the Indian conditions are found mentioned in the last two volumes as well.

After the death of Babar, Khondamir was attached to the court of Humayun for whom he wrote a treatise, entitled, *Qanun i Humayuni*.[66] It describes, particularly, the administrative innovations introduced by the emperor during the early years of his reign. Khondamir was on the personal staff of Humayun during his campaign to Malwa and Gujarat in 1534-35 when he died in the imperial camp. According to his own desire, expressed just before his death, Khondamir's body was brought to Delhi and buried close to the tombs of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya and Amir Khusrau.

The Travelogues

A few travelogues of the foreigners, who visited India during the early medieval period, also throw some light on the political developments and socio-cultural history of their times.

Ibn Battuta[67] (c. 1304-78) occupies a premier position among them; he was an Arab traveller and adventurer from Morocco. An expert in Islamic theology and jurisprudence, Ibn Battuta left his home in 1325 on a life-long tour of the world. After passing through the countries of northern Africa and the Arabian peninsula, he reached Sind in 1333, from where he moved on to

65. Chapter 4 in volume (*mujilad*) iii is devoted exclusively to the account of Babar, the living patron of the author.
66. *Qanun i Humayuni* (or *Humayun Namah*), edited by M. Hidayat Hosain, Calcutta, *Bib. Indica*, 1940, English trs. by Beni Parshad, Calcutta, 1940.
67. Abu Abdullah *alias* Muhammad Ibn Battuta.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Delhi. He was extended patronage by Muhammad bin Tughluq who appointed him the *qazi* of Delhi. He held this post for about eight years but, to his misfortune, some cases of corruption and dishonesty were brought forward against him which landed Ibn Battuta into the jail. However, he secured his release by making a personal appeal to the sultan. The latter despatched Ibn Battuta to China at the head of a diplomatic mission in 1342; on the way his party met with a shipwreck and he had to return to Delhi without completing his assignment. Thereafter, Ibn Battuta bade farewell to Delhi and moved on his sojourn again; after visiting Maldive islands and Ceylon, he returned to southern India and stayed at Madura for a shortwhile. From there he went to Mecca on a *haj* pilgrimage before his return to his homeland in 1349. Ibn Battuta received a warm reception from the ruler and the people of Morocco; by this time he had acquired a world-wide fame as philosopher and saint. He enjoyed love and reverence of his countrymen and died at the ripe age of seventy-three.

Ibn Battuta wrote his travelogue, entitled, *Kitab ur Rehla*[68] in Arabic, a part of which is devoted to his experiences of the Indian life at Delhi and Madura. His book is a primary source of history of the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq; it throws light on the socio-political condition of his times. The account, though a sincere and straightforward record of Battuta's personal observations and experiences, suffers, however, from some inaccuracies and shortcomings as a book of history. It was because Ibn Battuta's knowledge of Persian (the court language of the sultans) and Indian languages was very poor. This author was not a historiographer by nature and temperament; he did not show resourcefulness in obtaining accurate information about the various events and political developments of his days. Nevertheless, his travelogue is a very valuable treatise written by a foreigner on the life and conditions of Hindustan during the Tughluq period. His account of Muhammad bin Tughluq's character needs to be read with caution as it suffers from some bias.

Abdur Razzak, the celebrated author of *Matlaus Sa'dain wa Majmaul Bahrain*,[69] 'The Rising of the Two Fortunate Planets (Jupiter and Venus) and the Junction of the Two Seas', was a Persian scholar. He was born at Herat in 1413; his father Jalaluddin Ishaq was a widely travelled man who held the post of *qazi* of Samarqand towards the fag-end of his life under Sultan Shah Rukh of Khurasan. Abdur Razzak entered the service of

68. Translated in English by A. Mahdi Husain, entitled, *The Rehla of Ibn Battuta*, Baroda, 1953; abridged trs. by H A E R Gibb, Broadway Travellers Series, London, 1929; also, by the Hakluyt Society, second series, Cambridge, 1958; *E & D*, III, pp. 585-612.

69. Extracts by R.H. Major in *India in the Fifteenth Century*; "Being a Collection of Narratives of Voyages to India"; Hakluyt Society, London, 1857, Indian Reprint, Deep Publications, Delhi, 1974.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

the sultan after the death of his father in 1437. He was sent as an ambassador to the court of Vijayanagar; he stayed in Deccan for about two years (1442-43). He adorned the court of the sultans of Khurasan till his death in 1482; during the last ten years of his life, he was the superintendent of the *khanqah* of the late Sultan Shah Rukh. Abdur Razzak spent his time in literary pursuits; the above-mentiond history of central Asia, in two volumes, is one of his contributions. In the first volume, the author gives, among other things, an account of Amir Timur's invasion of India; in the second volume, he describes the history of Timur's descendants from Shah Rukh (c. 1404) to Sultan Hasan Mirza (upto 1470); it is in this volume that he gives a detailed account of his journey to and from Vijayanagar court and its working, the personal life-style of the sovereign and his countries, and the socio-cultural condition of the people of Deccan in general. His travelogue is one of the primary sources of history of the Vijayanagar kingdom of the early medieval period.

A few European travellers who visited India during the early medieval period have also made some useful references to the land and its people in their travelogues. They include, among others, Marco Polo, Nicolo Conti, Duarte Barbosa and Domingos Paes. *Marco Polo*, 'the great father of modern geography'[70] was a native of Venice. He set on a sojourn of the world in the company of his father and uncle in 1271, and after passing through many countries, reached the court of Kublai Khan, the mongol emperor of China in 1274. Marco Polo entered into the service of the great Khan and stayed in his court for seventeen long years. Thereafter, he returned to Venice in 1294-95; on his way back, Marco Polo visited the Andaman (*Angaman*) islands and sailed along the eastern and western sea coasts of India. In the course of his explorations, he attempted to acquaint himself with the 'natural history' and the rich agricultural and industrial products which might become valuable as articles of commerce betwen India and Europe. Marco Polo, in his travelogue,[71] speaks of brisk maritime trade and commerce along the Indian coasts. He describes the life and condition of the common people and gives a vivid account of their dress, food habits, manners and social customs.

More than a century and a half later, yet another Venetian, Nicolo Conti (Nicolo de'Conti), visited southern India under similar conditions. While as a young man, Nicolo Conti had settled in Damascus as a merchant sometime in the beginning of the fifteenth century. The spirit of adventure and exploration led him to the countries of the East including India, Ceylon, Sumatra, Java and China. It is said that after about twenty-five years of

70. R.H. Major, India in the Fifteenth Century; *loc. cit.*

71. *Travels of Marco Polo*; English trs. with notes by H. Yule and H. Cordier, 2 vols., London, 1903, 1920.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

wandering, he ultimately returned to his mother country in c. 1444 A.D. While in Cairo, he fell into the hands of some Arab fanatics, lost his wife and two children, and was compelled to renounce Christianity in order to save his life. On return to Rome, he pleaded for absolution for his apostasy from Pope Eugene IV. The latter granted his request on the simple condition that, as a penance, he should narrate his true adventures in the far-off lands. His narrative which was recorded in Latin by the Pope's secretary (Poggio Bracciolini) constitutes the travelogue of Nicolo Conti.[72] He had sailed along the cost of Malabar and visited the interior of Deccan in c. 1420. His narrative gives a few glimpses of the royal court of Vijayanagar and throws light on the socio-economic condition of southern India in general.

Duarte Barbosa was a Portuguese official in Cochin during c. 1500-16. His description of southern India, particularly that of the Vijayanagar, is of great geographical and ethnographical significance.[73] So also is the narrative of another Portuguese traveller Domingos Poes who visited Vijayanagar kingdom during c. 1500-02.[74]

Mughal Historians of Early Medieval India

Some contemporary works, primarily related to the Mughal period, also throw light on certain aspects of the early medieval history. They include, among others, *Tuzuk i Baburi*[75]: Abul Fazl's *Akbar Nama*[76] (including *Ain i Akbari*)[77], Badauni's *Muntakhabut Tawarikh*[78], *Tabaquat i Akbari*[79] of Nizamuddin Ahmad and *Tarikh*

72. The original version has been lost to the posterity but its translations in Portuguese and Italian languages are available. English trs. with notes by J. Winter Jones in R.H. Major, India in the Fifteenth Century; *op. cit*; pp. 1-39.

73. *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*; English trs. by L. Dames. 2 vols; Hakluyt Society, London, 1918, 1921.

74. For a detailed account of Domingos Paes and Duarte Barbosa refer to K.A.N. Sastri, *Foreign Notices of South India*; Madras, 1939.

75. English tr. by A.S. Beveridge, 2 vols; London, 1921.

76. It is in three volumes—*Ain i Akbari* comprises its third volume. English trs. by H. Beveridge, 3 vols; *Bib. Indica*; Calcutta, 1894-1939.

77. English trs. of *Ayeen Akbery* by F Gladwin, 3 vols; Calcutta, 1783-86; also, *Ain i Akbari* in three volumes : Vol. I by Blochmann; Vols. II and III by Jarrett; *Bib. Indica*; Calcutta, 1939; and Vols II & III by J N Sarkar, *Bib. Indica*; 1948-49.

78. Mulla Abdul Qadir Ibn i Muluk Shah al-Badauni, *Muntakhabut Tawarikh*; edited in 3 vols by Kabiruddin Ahmad Ali & W. N. Lees, *Bib. Indica*; Calcutta, 1864-69; English trs. Vol. I by G.S.A. Ranking; Vol. II by W.H. Lowe & Vol. III by T. W. Haig; *Bib. Indica*, 1884-1925.

79. Nizamuddin Ahmad Bakhshi, *Tabaqat i Akbari*: English trs. by B. De & B. Prashad, *Bib. Indica*; 3 vols; Calcutta, 1913-40; extracts, *E & D*, IV, pp. 187-476.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

i Firishta.[80]

Ahmad Yadgar wrote *Tarikh i Salatin i Afghana* or *Tarikh i Shahi*[81] in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. It gives an authentic account of the Lodhi and the Sur dynasties which is based on all the literary sources then available on the subject. The author, in the preface, describes himself as the servant of the Sur kings *albeit* his father was *wazir* to Mirza Askari, Babar's third son, in the Gujarat campaign in 1536-37. The book is said to have been undertaken by Ahmad Yadgar under the patronage of Daud Shah, the last prince of the afghan race in India, who was beheaded by the orders of Khan-i-Khana in 1575; it was completed, however, under the direction of Akbar in 1601. It gives a refreshing account of the struggle carried on by the afghan princes against Babar and Humayun for the re-establishment of their political ascendancy in Hindustan.

Abdullah of Koil (Aligarh) wrote *Tarikh i Daudi*[82] in the time of the Emperor Jahangir (1605-21). It gives an account of the afghan rulers of India, including the Lodhi and the Surs. The author says nothing about himself nor refers to any contact with the Mughal court. He seems to have been a freelance afghan writer who 'involuntarily conceived the design' of collecting scattered records of afghan rulers to compile them into one volume 'with the aid of the Almighty'. The book starts with the rise to power of Behlol Lodhi, the first afghan ruler of India, and carries the narrative to the reign of Adil Shah Sur. The author concludes with the account of Daud Shah; the book is dedicated to him. Like the typical history of the period, the account is deficient in chronological sequence and dates; nevertheless, it contains some interesting stories and anecdotes of the sultans, particularly Sikander Lodhi. About the discipline of history the author writes:

> History is not simply information regarding the affairs of kings who have passed away, it is a science which expands the intellect and furnishes the wise with examples.[83]

Khwaja Niamatullah Haravi compiled *Tarikh i Khan Jahani*[84] in 1613 at Burhanpur during the reign of Jahangir. He was an

80. Translated into Engligh and edited by John Briggs under the title, *History of the Rise of the Mohammedan Power in India Till the Year 1612*; 4 vols; London, 1829; reprinted by R. Cambray & Co of Calcutta, 1908-10; Urdu trs. by M. Fida Ali Talib, 4 vols; Hyderabad, 1926-32.
81. Edited by M. Hidayat Husain, *Bib. Indica*; Calcutta, 1939; extracts, *E & D*, I, pp. 1-66.
82. *E & D*, IV, pp. 434-513.
83. *E & D*, IV, p. 434.
84. Edited by Imamuddin, Dacca, 1960. A shorter recension of the same work called *Makhzan i Afghani*, translated into English by B. Dorn, Oriental Translation Fund, London, 1829-36. The differences between the two recensions are given in *E & D*, V, pp. 67-115, with copious notes.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

offical historiographer (*waqiah navis*) of Jahangir till 1608-09; later on, he joined the personal staff of Khan Jahan Lodhi whom he accompanied in the Deccan campaign. The book was written by him at the bidding of Khan Jahan Lodhi. It gives a genealogical record of the various afghan tribes with special reference to the Lodhis and the Surs who gained political ascendancy in early medieval India.

We possess quite a few excellent literary works, written particlarly during the Mughal period, on the history of the regional and provincial states of the early medieval India. Among these, mention may be made of the *Tarikh i Sind*,[85] written by Mir Muhammad Masum of Bhakhar in about 1600 during the reign of Akbar. Also known as *Tarikh i Masumi*, after its author, the book gives the regional history of Sind since its conquest by the Arabs to the time of Akbar. It draws freely from *Chachnama* in describing the pre-muslim history of Sind and uses numerous contemporary sources to give a brief but authentic history of the province with special reference to its administration under Akbar.

Riyazus Salatin[86] of Ghulam Husain Salim, written in 1788, outlines the history of Bengal since the invasion of Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khalji to date.[87]

For the history of Gujarat,[88] we have several works, including *Mirat i Sikandari*[89] of Sikandar bin Muhammad (completed in 1611); the *Mirat i Ahmadi*[90] of Ali Muhammad Khan (c. 1756-61), and *Tarikh i Gujarat*[91] of Mir Abu Turab Vali. The history of the Bahmani kingdom and that of the Nizamshahi dynasty of Ahmadnagar has been well preserved in *Burhan i Ma'asir*[92] of Sayyid Ali Tabataba written between 1591-96. The author was an official of the sultans of Golconda and Ahmadnagar.

Similarly, the *Tazkirat ul Muluk*,[93] written by Rafiuddin Shirazi

85. English trs. by R.H. Thomas, Bombay, 1855; edited by U.M. Daudpota, Poona, 1938; extracts, *E & D*, I, pp. 212-52.
86. Edited by A.H. Abid, *Bib. Indica*, 1890-98; trs. by A. Salam, *Bib. Indica*, 1902-4.
87. For detailed bibliography on the history of early medieval Bengal, refer to Jadunath Sarkar (ed.), *The History of Bengal*; Vol. II, University of Dacca, 1948, pp. 501-08.
88. Refer to Sayyid A.A. Tirmizi, "*The Contemporary Persian Chronicles of the Sultans of Gujarat : A Study* (AH 810-980 : AD 1407-1573)"—*Islamic Culture*; XXXII, 1958, pp. 121-34.
89. English trs. by E.C. Bayley under the title *The Local Muhammedan Dynasties, Gujarat*; London, 1886.
90. Partly translated by J. Bird in his *Political and Statistical History of Gujarat*: London, 1835.
91. Edited by E. Denison Ross, *Bib. Indica*; Calcutta, 1909.
92. English trs. by J.S. King under the title, *The History of the Bahmani Dynasty*; London, 1900.
93. English trs. by J.S. King in *ibid*.

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between 1608-12, deals with the history of the Bahmani kingdom and its subsequent offshoots, the states of Bijapur, Ahmadnagar, Golconda, Berar and Bidar. The author was governor of Bijapur under sultan Ali Adil Shah II (1557-79).

Riyazul Insha[94] is a valuable collection of letters, documents and despatches of Mahmud Gawan, the most celebrated prime minister of the Bahmani kingdom.

Indigenous Literature

Numerous hindu states flourished in India, side by side with the sultanate of Delhi; many of these never fell into the hands of the turks nor did they accept any Islamic influence for a long time. A number of regional Hindu states, though subjugated earlier by the turks, re-asserted their independence and quite a few new ruling dynasties came into existence on the slow but steady disintegration of the Delhi sultanate beginning from the middle of the fourteenth century. The rise of the Vijayanagar kingdom in the south during the early medieval period was by itself a unique political-cum-socio-cultural phenomenon. Their history is reconstructed by the sources which are almost entirely indigenous in nature and do not have much to do with the Arabic and Persian literary sources as given above.

Indigenous literature on early medieval history includes, among other works, a series of Sanskrit poetical compositions, bearing the common title of *Rajatarangini*, which record the history of Kashmir. Kalhana Pandit[95] was the pioneer historiographer who wrote the first *Rajatarangini* and described in it the history of Kashmir from the earliest times to 1148-49. Two centuries later, the thread of the narrative was picked up by Jyots-nakara popularly known as Jonaraja; he wrote the history of Kashmir from 1149 to 1459 and gave the same title *Rajatarangini* to it. Jonaraja's work is thus the earliest contemporary history of Kashmir during the sultanate period. Grandson of Lohraja and son of Bhatta Nonaraja, the celebrated author of the second *Rajatarangini*, was born in c. 1389; he was a courtier of sultan Zainul Abidin. The book was written by him at the bidding of the sultan; accordingly, the author exaggerates the virtues of his royal patron, otherwise his book constitutes a standard work of historical literature. Jonaraja continued the narrative till his death in 1459. Thereafter, his pupil Srivara,[96] who also rose to be a distinguished scholar,

94. Edited by Shaikh Chand, Hyderabad (Deccan), 1948. For detailed bibliography on Bahmani kingdom, see H.K. Sherwani. *The Bahmanis of Deccan*; Hyderabad (Deccan), 1953.

95. Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*; English trs. by M.A. Stein, 2 vols; London, 1900; also, by R.S. Pandit, Allahabad, 1935.

96. Jonaraja, Srivara, Prajyabhatta and Suka, *Dvitiya, Tritiya and Chaturtha Rajatarangini*; 1st ed. by M.A. Troyer, Culcutta, 1835; 2nd ed. by P. Peterson; first edited trs. of all the *Rajatarangini*s by J.C. Dutt, under the title, *Kings of Kashmir*; 3 vols; Calcutta, 1879-88.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

poet and musician, and enjoyed the patronage of Zainul Abidin and his successors, produced yet another historical composition in Sanskrit poetry, under the title, *Jaina Rajatarangini*. His work contains the history of the ruling house of Kashmir from 1459 to 1486. From the literary point of view, it is inferior in quality from the earlier compositions *albeit* it is equally valuable as a work of history. The tradition of writing the history of Kashmir under the title *Rajatarangini* was continued by Prajyabhatta and Suka whose works help us, to some extent, in reconstructing the history of the reign upto 1596 but their compositions are not of much literary or historical merit. Kashmir was conquered by Akbar in 1585.[97]

The bards of Rajputana composed poems on the military exploits or love stories of their martial heroes for the amusement of the people; these are of considerable help in the reconstruction of history of the times. Chand Bardai, the royal bard of Prithviraj III, the chauhan ruler of Delhi and Ajmer, narrates the heroic exploits of his patron in his epic composition, entitled *Prithviraja Raso*.[98] In spite of its obvious drawbacks, its value as a piece of historical literature was duly recognised by James Tod, the celebrated author of the *Annals and Antiquities* of *Rajasthan*.[99] The *Prithviraja Raso* gives not only a glimpse of the life and death struggle between the Rajputs and Muhammad Ghori but also throws a flood of light on the political, military and socio-economic structure of the 'rajput civilisation' immediately before the establishment of the turkish rule in India.[100]

Similarly, the *Prithviraja Vijaya*,[101] written by Jayanaka between 1193-1200 is a reliable source of history for the chauhan rulers of Sapadalaksha and Ajmer.

R. Sewell was the first modern historian who produced a comprehensive history of the Vijayanagar kingdom under the title, *A Forgotten Empire*,[102] by making use of the indigenous sources in Sanskrit and Telugu languages.

97. The only Persian source book for the history of Kashmir for the period 1420-1540 is *Tarikh i Rashidi* by Mir a Hyder Dughlat; English trs. by F. Denison Ross & N. Elias, London, 1895.
For detailed bibliography on the subject, refer to W. Haig, "The Chronology and Genealogy of the Muhammedan Kings of Kashmir;" a *JRASB*; 1918, pp. 451-68; M. Husain, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*; Calcutta, 1959; & R.K Parmu, *A History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir*; Delhi, 1969.

98. *Prithviraja Raso* (Hindi), edited by Hazari Prasad Dwivedi & Namvar Singh, Allahabad, 1952; by Vipin Bihari Trivedi, Lucknow, 1953; and by B.P. Sharma, Chandigarh, 1963; also refer to *Prithviraja Raso : Aik Samiksha*; by Vipin Bihari Trivedi, Lucknow, 1964.

99. 2 vols; London, 1829; reprint, 1957.

100. "The poets are the chief, though not the sole historians of western India; neither is there any deficiency in them though they speak in a peculiar language, which requires to be translated into the sober language of probability."—Tod, I, pp. xv.

101. Edited by G.H. Ojha & C. Guleri, Ajmer, 1941.

102. London, 1900.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Following in his footsteps, S.K. Ayyangar[103] and K.A.N. Sastri[103] collected, translated and edited numerous indigenous sources which had a bearing on the subject.

Archaeological Sources

The sultans of Delhi did not leave behind much epigraphic evidence of historical significance *albeit* their coins have proved to be very useful in fixing the chronology of events and correcting or ascertaining the genealogical tables of the rulers. The archaeological sources, including the inscriptions, coins, monuments and other antiquities are of immense value in the reconstruction of the history of southern India and all those regional states which remained outside the pale of Muslim domination during the early medieval period. In their general application, the epigraphic and numismatic find-spots help us in determining the approximate limits of the regional kingdoms. The monuments of the sultanate period give us an insight into the cultural trends of the times. They are a living testimony to the intermingling of the hindu and muslim architectural traditions and structural designs ; they reveal, in unambiguous terms, the living conditions, faiths and beliefs, and the socio-cultural outlook of the sovereigns and the upper strata of the early medieval society. The inscriptions have been published mostly in the *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, *Epigraphia Indica* and other antiquarian journals. A collection of all the inscriptions published in the *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica* (1907-38), chronologically arranged with summaries, is given by V.S. Bendrey in *A Study of Muslim Inscriptions*.[105] Edward Thomas made extensive use of the numismatic sources in *The Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi*,[106] his work is supplemented by the catalogues of coins in various museums of India and England.[107] The researches done by Percy Brown, Burgess, Fergusson, Havell, Cousens, John

103. S.K. Ayyangar, *Sources of Vijayanagar History*; Madras University Historical Series—1, 1919.

104. K.A.N. Sastri & N. Venkataramanaya, *Further Sources of Vijanayagar History*; 2 vols; Madras University Historical Series, no. 18, 1946.

105. Karnatak Publishing House, Bombay, 1944.

106. London, 1871.

107. Refer to S. Lane Poole, *The Coins of the Sultans of Delhi*; being Vol. I of *The Catalogue of Indian Coins in the Britsh Museum*; London, 1884.
C.J. Rodgers, *Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museums*; Part I : "The Sultans of Delhi and Their Contemporaries in Bengal, Jaunpur, Malwa, the Dekkan and Kashmir"; Calcutta, 1894.
H. Nelson Wright. *Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum, Calcutta*; 2 vols; II, Oxford, 1907; and, *The Sultans of Delhi, Their Coinage and Metrology*; Delhi, 1936.
Shamsuddin Ahmad. *Supplement to Volume II of the Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, by A.N. Wright*; Delhi, 1939.
C.R. Singhal, *Bibliography of Indian Coins*; pt. ii, Muhammedan and Indian Coins, Bombay, 1952.

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Marshall[108] and a host of other specialists in art and architecture provide ample material to the historiographer, interested in the reconstruction of the history of the early medieval period of India.

108. Refer to A. Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture* (Islamic Period); Bombay, 1944.

J. Burgess, *On the Muhammedan Architecture of Bharoch, Cambay, Dholka, Champanir and Mahmudabad in Gujarat*; London, 1896.

James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*; 2nd revised edition by James Burgess & Phene Spiers, 2 vols; London, 1910.

E. B. Havell, *Indian Architecture : Its Psychology, Structure and History From the First Muhammedan Invasion to the Present Day*; London. 1913.

H. Cousens, *The Architectural Antiquities of Western India*; London; 1926; and *A Short Account of Early Muslim Architecture*; Pelican, 1958.

John Marshall, "Monuments of Muslim India" in *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol III, London, 1928.

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1

Twilight of Ancient India

1 : Political Condition

The Last Imperial Rulers of Ancient India

Harsha Vardhana[1] (606-47) was the last imperial ruler of northern and central India[2] in the ancient period. Kanauj (Kanyakubja), situated in the heart of the Gangetic valley, was his capital. His nearest rival in the south was Pulakesin II (c. 610-42), the chalukya ruler of Maharashtra. He wielded matching imperial power over the territories lying to the south of Narbada. Both of them could not, even collectively, claim paramountcy over the whole of the Indian subcontinent. During their times, there flourished about seventy regional rulers whose possessions were either interlocked between the two imperial states or situated along the periphery of their dominions. Some of them, of course, acknowledged the supremacy of either of the two monarchs.

The Fading Glory of Imperial Kanauj

The exit of Harsha and Pulakesin II closed the era of ancient Indian imperialism. There started a scramble for territorial possessions among their ex-feudatories and other princes, leading to further political disintegration of the country and the spread of near anarchy.

Abortive attempts were made by a number of individuals, backed by their respective clans and communities to revive the imperial traditions at Kanauj or elsewhere. On the ruins of Harsha's empire, one Yasovarman (c. 700-70), attempted to reunite northern

1. Birth c. 590 A.D; son of Prabhakar Vardhana, the king of Thanesar (in modern Haryana). Harsha did not leave behind an heir to the throne, which was usurped by his minister; it signalled immediate disintegration of his empire.
2. His empire extended from the Sutlej to the delta of the Brahmaputra in the east, to Gujarat and Kutch in the west, while the river Narbada formed its boundary in the south.

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India under one government with headquarters at Kanauj. He was a contemporary of king Dahir of Sind. After the conquest of Sind by the arabs, Yasovarman and king Lalitaditya of Kashmir (725-55) stemmed the tide of their advance in northern India. It seems that, soon afterwards, the two princes fell out with each other and Yasovarman was killed in a battle, by his adversary.

With the death of Yasovarman, there started a triangular contest for the occupation of Kanauj, the Rashtrakutas of Deccan, the Gurjara-Pratiharas of Malwa and the Palas of Bengal being the contestants. Ultimately, a Gurjara-Pratihara chief, Nagabhata (725-40) conquered Kanauj and laid the foundation of the imperial dynasty of his clan. His successors revived the imperial glory of Kanauj to a limited extent. Rajyapala, the last ruler of this dynasty succumbed before Mahmud of Ghazni (1018-19) and was put to death by the princes of Gwalior and Kalinjar for having shown cowardice in acknowledging the overlordship of the invader.[3]

Absence of Central Authority

Apart from the tottering kingdom of Kanauj, India was parcelled out into over one hundred regional kingdoms and petty principalities in the beginning of the eleventh century. Most of the princes and the ruling elite styled themselves 'rajputs'. The dawn of the century thus lands us in the so-called 'rajput period' (647-1200) of Indian history. The states were usually identified with their ruling clans, tribes or communities. Beyond the 'homelands' (used here in a very narrow and parochial sense) of such clans, the frontiers of these states were fluid and their territorial possessions underwent violent fluctuations under stress of continuous fratricidal wars. The frequent changes in the ruling dynasties or princes within the same ruling house, were not conducive to the development of a feeling of loyalty or emotional attachment towards them especially among the large mass of their subjects. In the face of territorial claims and counter-claims of the rival chieftains, 'might' became the 'supreme right' and the 'dispute' as to what was right was decided 'by the arbitrament of war.' A petty principality, on having got an ambitious and capable prince, would throw off the overlordship of its mighty neighbour and, in turn, claim some sort of dominance over the weaker and smaller states. Such claims of paramountcy were seldom well-defined and usually not pushed beyond tolerable limits. The weaker states, therefore, did not always dispute or offer much resistance to the vague imperial claims of their powerful neighbours. The whole process had a demoralising effect on all the rulers, big or small. There was no military power in the country strong enough to keep

3. For details refer to R.S. Tripathi, *History of Kanauj : to the Moslem Conquest*; Motilal Banarsidass, 1964, pp. 281-87.

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the warring princes in check and coordinate their activities against foreign aggression.

A brief description of these regional states and their prominent rulers on the eve of the invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni may be given.

(a) Northwestern India

Afghanistan and Punjab : Modern Afghanistan[4] was a part of ancient India; the afghans belonged to the pale of Indo-Aryan civilisation.[5] In the eighth century, the country was known by two regional names – Kabul and Zabul. The northern part, called Kabul (or Kabulistan) was governed by a Buddhist dynasty. Its capital and the river on the banks of which it was situated, also bore the same name. Lalliya[6], a Brahmin minister of the last Buddhist ruler Lagaturman, deposed his master and laid the foundation of the Hindushahi dynasty[7] in c. 865. Zabul (or Zabulistan), the southern region of modern Afghanistan, was then ruled by the rajputs[8] of the bhatti clan, probably.

The word 'afghan' is Persian in origin; it means 'to cry'. The term originated according to Akhund Derveza, a learned afghan saint of Akbar's reign, in the first battle (986-87) of Sabuktagin with Jaipal, the Hindushahi ruler of Kabul. When the encounter took place, the hindu soldiers raised such a loud noise that they non-plussed the army of Sabuktagin and gained the appellation of 'afghan' from the latter. It is said that besides warfare, even otherwise, the same rehearsal of fierce and piercing shriek in chorus was made by the hindu soldiers of Kabul amid singing and

4. Ancient name—*Asvakayana* (Sanskrit), *Assakenoi* (Greek).
5. The legend about the Jewish origin of the Afghans has been rejected by the modern historians. G.P. Tate has to say the following on this subject:
   "Afghanistan has been the ante-chamber of India for centuries of times beginning with ages of which no knowledge exists. Through this country have passed those successive immigrations of nations which have spread over the plains of the Punjab and upper India, from which the present-day population of those tracts has descended.....It is reasonable to suppose that some part of the immigrating nations must have remained in Afghanistan, and that from them are descended the semi-pastoral tribes who call themselves Afghans."
   The Kingdom of Afghanistan : A Historical Sketch; Delhi, reprint, 1973, pp. 12-13.
6. Referred as such by Kalhana—M.A. Stein (ed.), *Rajatarangini*; II, Note J —"The Sahi of Udabhanda." p. 336; and *Kalla* in E.C. Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, Delhi, reprint, 1964, II, pp. 10.
7. Variously described as *Hindu Shahiya* by Alberuni, *Shahi* by Kalhana and *Sahi* in the incriptions Regarding the foundation of the Hindushahi dynasty, see *Alberuni's India* (Sachau), II, pp 10-13; also, Yogendra Mishra, *The Hindu Shahis of Afghanistan and the Punjab*; Patna, 1972.
8. Mentioned as Rahbuts by the contemporary Muslim historians; probably a misreading of the term Rajputs in Persian. After their ouster by the Arabs, the Bhattis migrated to the Indus valley and western Punjab.

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dancing in feasts.[9] The term 'afghan' finds mention for the first time in the chronicles of the eleventh century when the entire valley of Kabul had passed under the rule of the dynasty founded by Sabuktagin.

The muslim arms penetrated into Afghanistan under the Arab leader Yaqub ibn Lais,[10] the founder of Saffarid dynasty. He conquered Siestan, Herat and Zabulistan during 867-70. The fort of Kabul was wrested by him from Lalliya in 870-71, though the main valley of Kabul was held firmly under their control by the Hindushahis. Yakub is said to have laid the foundation of Ghazni by building a fort there. Alptagin was the first turkish general who conquered Ghazni from the last Arab chief Abu Bakr Lawik in c. 962.

The boundaries of the Hindushahi kingdom stretched from the river Chenab in Punjab to the Hindukush. Its rulers acted as a bulwark against the Arab and turkish onslaught on their western borders for a long time. Under constant pressure from the muslim invaders, they were, however, compelled to remove their capital to the east of Khyber pass at Udabhandapur or Waihand[11] on the western bank of the Indus near Attock on the ancient highway from Peshawar to Lahore in about 995. Jaipal, the king of Waihand, was a contemporary of Sabuktagin and his son Mahmud, the turkish rulers of Ghazni Jaipal and his family bore the brunt of turkish invasions from 997 to 1021.

Sind and Multan : The lower Indus valley, to the south of Multan and including Sind and Mekran, comprised an independent kingdom during the times of Harsha. It was ruled by a *sudra* dynasty. Its ruler Sahiras, a contemporary of Harsha, was killed by the Persian invaders. His son and successor Rai Sahasi II had a brahman minister, called Chach. On the death of his master, Chach usurped the throne and married the widowed queen. The majority of his subjects were Jats by race and Buddhist by faith. The new ruling dynasty was, therefore, 'alien' both in race and religion. Its rule was oppressive and hence unpopular. Dahir, a son of Chach, ascended the throne in c. 708. He faced the Arab invasion of Sind in 711-12 and perished with family in the struggle.[12]

9. Mohammad Hosain Khan, *A Few Phases of the Afghans in Juliundur Basties*; Jullunder, 1937, p. 10.
10. Originally a brazier by profession.
11. Udabhanda or Udabhandapur literally meant 'the town of waterpots'; (mod. village Und), also written as Hund, Uhand, Ohind, Waihand.—Waihind by the various muslim chroniclers. The town was mentioned by Alberuni as the capital of Gandhara, the ancient name for the northwestern part of India—*Alberuni's India* (Sachau); I, p. 259; also *E & D*, II, p. 438.
12. For the Arab conquest of Sind and Multan, and its effects, see Section 2 of this chapter.

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Kashmir : The Himalayan valley of Kashmir constituted a part of Mauryan and Kushana empires. During Harsha's reign, it was ruled by Karkota dynasty (c. 627-855), founded by Durlabha Vardhan, a Kashmiri brahman. The kingdom underwent a few dynastic changes but all through it remained under the control of brahmans till the fourteenth century. Being surrounded by huge mountains and isolated from the plains, it did not play any significant role in the country's politics. On the eve of Mahmud's invasions, it was ruled by a notorious lady, queen Didda.[13] On her death in 1003, her brother Sangramraja, son of king Udyaraja of Lohara (Lohkot, mod. Lohrin, in the territory of Poonch), laid the foundation of a new dynasty, known after Lohara. It produced a number of powerful and capable rulers who foiled all attempts of the muslim invaders to establish their foothold in the valley during the next three centuries.

Thanesar : Most probably, Thanesar, constituted an independent principality in the beginning of the eleventh century. Having been the ancestral estate of Harsha. Vardhana, it might have retained its separate identity long after his fall. Firishta's statement that Thanesar was included in the kingdom of Delhi is wrong; Delhi had not yet come into prominence in the first quarter of the eleventh century. Alberuni has mentioned Thanesar but not Delhi in his geographical chapter of *Tarikhul Hind.*

(b) Eastern India

Bengal : It constituted the hub of Mauryan and Gupta empires but fell out of the imperial fold on the decline of the latter. It saw a brief rise and fall of two regional kingdoms—that of Gaud in the northwest, and Venga in the central and eastern parts. In the ninth century, Gopal laid the foundation of the Pala dynasty in Bengal.[14] Its rulers extended their control over the whole of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Under the weak successors of Deyapala (833-78), the kingdom declined but its fortunes were restored to some extent by Mahipala I (988-1038). When Mahmud was trampling northern India under his feet, Bengal was invaded by Rajendra Chola, the tamil ruler of the south. The political and military condition of Bengal was deplorable but it escaped destruction at the hands of Mahmud because of its long distance from the northwest frontier.

13. Daughter of Khasa Simharaja, the king of Lohara; was married to Kshemgupta, the ruler of Kashmir (950-58). His son and successor Abhimanyu died in 972, leaving behind three minor sons. The queen dowager, Didda, placed them on the throne one by one between 958-80, acted as their regent but got them murdered and assumed the royal power into her own hands. She ruled from 980 to 1003—*History and Culture of the Indian People*; Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Series (abbreviated hereafter *BVB*), IV, pp. 119-20
14. For details refer to R.D. Banerji, *The Palas of Bengal*; Varanasi 1973.

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Assam : The Brahmaputra valley in Assam, known as Kamrup (Kamarupa) in ancient times, had been under the control of a Brahman family since ages. Its rulers had been the feudatories of imperial Guptas. King Bhaskarvarman of Kamrup was a vassal of Harsha Vardhana. After the latter's death, Kamrup secured independence under its hereditary chieftains. In the beginning of the eleventh century, Brahmapala ruled Kamrup with his capital at Durjaya (mod. Gauhati). He and his successors safeguarded their independence against the repeated attacks of Yadavas of eastern Bengal and other adversaries.

Apart from Kamrup, another regional kingdom was in existence in the lower valley of Brahmaputra in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Its capital was Srihatta or modern Sylhet.[15]

Nepal : The valley of Nepal constituted a part of the Mauryan and Gupta empires. After the disintegration of the Gupta empire it got its local rulers in the fifth century. A rajput chief, Raghudeva established his rule in Nepal and laid the foundation of Thakuri dynasty in 879 and commemorated the event by starting a Nepali era.[16] One of his successors, Gunakamdeva (949-94), is said to have founded a new town named Kantipur (mod. Kathmandu) at the confluence of Bagmati and Vishnumati rivers. He was succeeded by Bhojdeva (994-1023).[17] Because of its isolation from the plains, it remained aloof from the political upheavals of the country over the centuries.

(c) Central and Western India

The four clans of agnikula rajputs—Pratiharas, Parmars, Chalukyas and Chauhans occupied a premier position among the ruling chiefs of central and western India. They were foreign immigrants who became Indianised and were included in the fold of Hinduism.

The Pratihars belonged to the gurjara tribes. It is said that one of their ancestors had once served the Rashtrakutas (753-973) as a doorkeeper (*pratihara*). They set up a couple of independent principalities in Rajputana and Malwa and, ultimately, came to acquire Kanauj as well.

The Parmars were feudatories of the Gurjara-Pratiharas at one time. They set up an independent kingdom at Dhar (Ujjain). The Parmar ruler Bhoja[18] was famous for his military prowess,

15. It saw the reign of about half a dozen independent rulers. It was conquered by Sikander Khan Ghazi in 1303, during the period of sultan Firoze Tughluq.
16. Netra B. Thapa, *A Short History of Nepal*; Kathmandu, 1973, p. 37.
17. *ibid.*
18. For details, refer to K.C. Jain, *Malwa Through the Ages (from the earliest times to 1305 A.D.)*; Motilal Banarsidass, 1972.

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scholarship and patronage of art and literature. He was known to the muslim chroniclers as Parmardeo, 'one of the greatest kings of Hindustan.' When he heard of Mahmud's invasion of Somnath (1025-26) he marched out of his capital with a huge force to intercept the invader. Mahmud also got wind of it and rushed back to Ghazni along the extreme western route to avoid clash with the rajput forces.

The Chalukya rajputs had provided two major dynasties to south India since the sixth century—the Early Chalukyas of Vatapi (C. 550-753) and the Later Chalukyas of Kalyani (founded, 973 A.D.). Yet another Chalukya chief, Mulraja (960-95) set up as an independent ruler at Anhilwara (*Anahilapataka*). He entered into an ugly conflict with the Parmars of Malwa which proved harmful to both in the long run. Durlabharaja Chalukya (1000-21) was a contemporary of Mahmud of Ghazni. On his death, his nephew Bhimdeo ascended the throne of Anhilwara. When Mahmud invaded Somnath, he fled the capital and took shelter in a fortress in the Rann of Kutch.

A chauhan (*chahamana*) chief Samanta, founded the kingdom of Sambhar,[19] around modern Ajmer, in the eighth century. He became famous by offering strong resistance to the arab invaders from Sind (C. 750).[20] In the beginning of the eleventh century, the town of Ajmer had not yet been founded[21] nor Delhi shot into prominence as a political entity. Like the Hindushahis of north-western India, the chauhans of Sambhar (later Ajmer) stood forth as a bulwark against the penetration of muslims into the heart of India and maintained the struggle 'with great vigour and obstinacy'.

Sambhar was ruled by Govindraja II, nicknamed Gandu, son of Durlabharaja, at the dawn of the eleventh century.[22] He and his successor Vakpati II (C. 1003-33) were contemporaries of Mahmud of Ghazni but do not seem to have come into direct clash with the latter.[23]

Some rajput clans were direct descendants of ancient kshatriyas or aboriginal Indian tribes.

The Chandel principality of Jaijakbhukti (mod. Bundelkhand) was founded by Nanak, a scion of the Gonds, in the ninth century. He was a feudatory of the Gurjara-Pratiharas of Kanauj; his

19. *Sapada-laksha* territory (of one and a quarter *lakh* villages).
20. Samanta was the earliest known ancestor of Prithviraja Chauhan (III) of Ajmer and Delhi who fell fighting Muhammad Ghori towards the close of the twelfth century.
21. Ajayadeva, successor of Samanta, built a fort and a town at the present site of Ajmer in c. 1093 and shifted his capital there from Sambhar. The place was named Ajayameru.
22. *BVB*, V, p. 81.
23. Mahmud did not reach Sambhar, the then chauhan capital, during his plundering raids. It is, however, probable that they had supplied troops to the Hindushahi rulers to fight the turks on two different occasions.

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successors became independent in the first half of the tenth century. His son and successor Yasovarman, born of his chauhan queen, captured Kalinjar. Yasovarman was succeeded by Dhangaraja on the throne of Kalinjar; he sent a contingent to Peshawar to support Jaipal against Sabuktagin (1000-01). He spent a lot of money to get two Shiva temples constructed at Khajuraho. His son and successor Gandaraja (1018-22) and the latter's eldest son Vidyadhara fought Mahmud of Ghazni.

Arjuna, the Kachchapaghata (later Kachhwaha) chief of Gwalior, was a feudatory of the Chandels of Kalinjar. He also fought against Mahmud of Ghazni in 1022-23.

The kalachuris of Dahala or chedi (Madhya Pradesh) were pure kshatriyas. They belonged to the lunar race, and were orthodox hindus. Subsequently, they established their capital at Tripura (or Tripuri) near Jubbulpore.[24] It was ruled by Gangeya in the beginning of the eleventh century. He expanded his kingdom at the cost of the Gurjara-Pratihara neighbours. Banaras was included in the Kalachuri dominions. The turkish invaders under Mahmud did not reach Gangeya's territories.

The guhilot or guhila rajput chief Bappa Rawal had set up a small kingdom in Mewar. Its *ranas* did not attempt to expand their dominions at the cost of their neighbours but, at the same time, zealously safeguarded their own independence. The kingdom of Mewar was neither very powerful nor rich but its rulers played a glorious role in the medieval Indian history as patriots, the defenders of their independence and self-respect.

(d) Southern India

Pulakesin II (c. 610-42), the imperial ruler of the Deccan,[25] belonged to the Early Chalukya or Solanki dynasty of Vatapi (mod. Badami, near Bijapur). It had risen into prominence about the middle of the sixth century. The Chalukyas constituted a part of the gurjara immigrants from central Asia who were Indianised, and became famous as one of the four agnikula rajput clans. The dynasty was founded by Jayasimha. His successors expanded their possessions into a mighty empire. Incidentally, Pulakesin II, the contemporary of Harsha Vardhana in the north, also proved to be the last imperial ruler of his dynasty. He was defeated and killed at the hands of Narasimha, the Pallava ruler of Kanchi. Pulakesin's successors, however, continued to rule for another century, when they were liquidated and supplanted by the Rashtrakutas.

24. Tripura or Tiwari Brahmins belong to this clan.
25. *Dakshinpatha* or the Deccan was the name given to the northern most part of south Indian peninsula; It comprised the land between the Vindhya mountains and the Tungbhadra river.

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The Rashtrakutas were once the feudatories of the Early Chalukyas. Their chief Dandivarman defeated his suzerain Kirtivarman in 753 and laid the foundation of Rashtrakuta supremacy in the Deccan. This dynasty produced a number of capable rulers. The last Rashtrakuta king Kakka II was overthrown by Tailapa (973 A.D.), the founder of the new Chalukya dynasty, known to history as the Later Chalukyas. Their capital was Kalyani in modern Andhra Pradesh. Tailapa fought successful wars against the Chalukyas of Anhilwara, the Parmars of Malwa, the Kalachuris of Chedi and the Cholas in the south; he ruled upto 1017 A.D.

The Cholas constituted the second greatest kingdom in the south at the dawn of the eleventh century.[26] They became prominent towards the close of the ninth century. Originally, the three tamil states of the far-south—the Cholas, the Cheras and the Pandyas, belonged to the pre-christian era. They maintained their separate entities even during the days of the Mauryan imperialism. Later on, they came to be dominated by the Andhras and then by the Pallavas. Towards the close of the ninth century, the Cholas established their hegemony over the Pallavas. Rairaja I (985-1012) laid the foundation of the imperial Chola empire by his extensive conquests. His empire included Kalinga (mod. Orissa) in the north and Ceylon in the south. Tanjore was his capital. His son and successor Rajindra Chola I (C. 1012-42) consolidated the empire carved out by his father and further expanded it. He was the greatest Indian ruler of his times. While the turks under Mahmud of Ghazni were defeating and humiliating the mighty hindu rulers of northern India, a bitter struggle was going on between the Later Chalukyas and the Cholas for the domination of the south. They seemed to have been least bothered about the happenings in the north.

2 : Arab Conquest of Sind and Multan

The Arabs had been the 'carriers of Indian trade' with Europe for centuries. After conversion to Islam, they cast their covetous eyes on the rich seaports of western India and made a number of abortive attempts to establish their foothold there. In the beginning of the eighth century, Al-Hajjaj, the Arab governor of Iraq, sent two expeditions against Sind at the bidding of his master

26. For detailed accounts, refer to R.G. Bhandarkar, *Early History of the Dekkan—Down to the Mahomedan Conquest* (reproduced from the Bombay Gazetteer); Calcutta, 1957; and M.N. Venkata Ramanappa, *Outlines of South Indian History*; Vikas, 2nd ed; 1976.

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Walid I, the Umayyid Caliph of Damascus. Both the attacks were beaten back and their Arab commanders killed by Dahir. Enraged at the repeated failures, Hajjaj despatched his youthful nephew and son-in-law Imaduddin Muhammad bin Qasim at the head of a huge army. Passing through Mekran (mod. Baluchistan) which had been conquered by the Arabs earlier, Qasim struck at Debal, the premier seaport of Sind. Dahir possessed a strong and well-equipped army but did not make any effort to protect the harbour; instead, he entrenched himself near his capital Rawar on the western bank of the Indus in the heart of Sind. The besieged garrison of Debal, outnumbered by the invaders, capitulated after some resistance; the Arab victory was followed by general massacre of the people and plunder of the town. Nerun and Sehwan, the strongholds of the Buddhist population were captured without a fight.

Once face to face with the invaders, Dahir gave a heroic fight and laid down his life along with thousands of his soldiers after two days of a bloody battle. His widow Ranibai refused to surrender the fort of Rawar and fought the invaders to the bitter end; having exhausted all her resources in men and material, she tasted death by performing *jauhar* along with numerous other besieged ladies. Qasim took about eight months to acquire control over Sind because his army met with tough resistance by the local populace of many other towns, including Brahmanabad and Alor.

Multan with the adjoining southwestern region of the Punjab was also conquered by the Arabs in 713. While at the height of his youthful career, Qasim was recalled by the Caliph, charged of moral turpitude[27] and put to death in 715-16.

The conquest of Sind and Multan boosted the morale of the Arabs in the muslim world for a while though it proved to be 'a mere episode in the history of India'[28] it affected only a 'fringe' of the vast country. All the subsequent attempts of the Arab chiefs to expand their possessions and penetrate into the heart of the country were foiled by the Indian princes. The Arabs were 'not destined to raise Islam to be a political force in India.'[29] Soon

27. Parmal Devi and Suraj Devi, the two daughters of the deceased *raja* Dahir, were taken captives and sent to Baghdad for introduction into the Caliph's *harem*. They falsely charged that Qasim had kept them with him for three days and dishonoured them before they were sent to the Caliph. It enraged the Caliph who inflicted death punishment on Qasim. Later, the princesses told the truth and invited death for themselves; they were tied to the tails of horses and dragged until they were dead. They thus wreaked their vengeance on Qasim who had killed their father and ruined their state, and saved their honour by sacrificing their lives all the same.

28. Wolseley Haig, *CHI*, III, p. 10.

29. A. B. M. Habibbulah, *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*; Allahabad, 2nd ed; 1961, p. 2.

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after this victory, the Umayyids themselves were knocked out of the international scene by the Abbasids in 750-51 who set up a new Caliphate with their headquarters at Baghdad. Their hold over the Indian possessions was very weak; by 871, the Arab governors of Mansurah (Sind proper) and Multan became virtually independent of the Caliphate. The discomfiture of the Arabs vindicates the fact that the Indian political structure was not yet so degenerate and hollow from within as it was found to be in the face of the Ghaznavid invasions.

The Arab conquest of Sind was, however, of great significance from the cultural point of view. The Arabs were deeply influenced by Indian culture and civilisation; they were fascinated by the wisdom, administrative acumen and high moral character of the vanquished. Hindus and buddhists were granted the status of *zimmis*, the protection of whose life and property was undertaken by the 'Islamic state' in return for the receipt of *jizya* from them. They were given freedom to 'live in their houses in whatever manner they liked' and 'worship their gods'. They began to be associated with the administration of the land, thus leading to the establishment of cordial relations between the rulers and the ruled. It set the stage for the ultimate cultural victory of the Indians over their new masters. The brahmin scholars and buddhist sages began to educate the arab ruling elite and their wards in Indian languages and literature, philosophy, astronomy, mathematics, medicine and other sciences. It led to the dissemination of Indian sciences and cultural values to the foreign lands. The Indian numerals, called *Hindse* (*e g.*, from India) were learnt by them from here and transmitted to Europe. Indian books were translated into arabic and carried to the Islamic countries for propagation of knowledge. Amir Khusrau mentions that an arabic astronomer Abu Ma'ashar went all the way to Banaras and studied Sanskrit language and astronomy there for over a decade. When the Arabs had conquered Sind, 'they were no champions of a new culture or civilisation', but, no wonder, they did become the cultural ambassadors of India to the Islamic world and Europe. Their religious fanaticism was also diluted by the friendly social conduct and liberal religious outlook of the Indians. The Arab settlers of Sind and Multan were thoroughly Indianised. They employed Indian architects and adopted Indian architectural concepts wholesale in the matter of construction of their residences, public buildings and the magnificent mosques. They adopted and patronised Indian music and other fine arts.

The Arab settlements in Sind and Multan made Islam a part and parcel of the Indian religious life, though confined to a part of the country only, to begin with. Within the conquered territories, many Indians embraced Islam voluntarily; its peaceful propagation was carried on by the muslim saints and the *ulama* in other parts of India too. The Arabs made a settlement in the Malabar, converted a local chieftain and established a foothold for Islam

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there long before the armies of Alauddin Khalji penetrated into the Deccan.

The conciliatory attitude of the Arabs enabled them to win the confidence of the conquered populace who were quickly reconciled to the *fait accompli*. Until liquidated by the turks, the small muslim states of Mansurah and Multan enjoyed three centuries of peaceful existence, in the neighbourbhood of mighty rajput kingdoms, primarily because of the support extended to them by their Indian subjects. For the latter, the Arabs were not the *mlechhas* (i.e., the impure); whereas, three centuries later, Mahmud of Ghazni and his turkish marauders were universally condemned as the *mlechhas* as per the testimony of Alberuni, because of the inhuman barbarities committed by them on the people.

3 : Pre-Muslim Society

Absence of Creative Leadership

The Indian society, since the death of Harsha to the muslim conquest of northern India, has often been styled the *rajput civilisation* which is a misnomer. The rajputs constituted but a fraction of the Indian society. They preserved some excellent socio-cultural traits of the past and contributed what may be called the *rajput culture* to the ancient Indian civilisation. As for the latter, the period of renaissance and social rejuvenation witnessed by it was long over with the decline of the Gupta empire. The period that followed, marks a *status quo* in the social and cultural development of the country. It presents the picture of a 'regulatory society' whose socio-political leadership ceased to be creative in its outlook and became lethargic in performance. The social virtues attributed to the rajputs were not universal; these were confined mostly to the ruling elite and upper strata of the society. Had the rajput princes and the social leadership inspired respect and confidence among the masses and the latter identified their interests with those of the rajput states, the Indian society would not have collapsed like a house of cards in the face of foreign aggression. It could have reorganised itself and thrown up even better leadership to safeguard the national independence. As a matter of fact, the Indians as a whole put up a very poor show at the time of national catastrophe and failed to act as a well-knit, self-disciplined and mature society because of its internal weaknesses which had gradually sapped its vitality. In spite of its outward magnificence and social stability, it had become hollow from within.

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Rajput Culture

The historians hold different views regarding the origin of the rajputs; one thing is however certain that they were of mixed origin. The rajput clans usually claimed their descent from the kshatriyas; in some cases, their claim was valid; the kshatriyas of ancient times could not have disappeared from the Indian political and social scene all at once or even gradually. Some of them were, however, foreign immigrants, admitted into the fold of hindu society through formal conversion and purification, as for example, the four clans of 'agnikula' rajputs—Parmaras Pratihars, Chauhans and Chalukyas.

The rajput society was feudal in its organisational set-up. It was split up into various clans, each under one or more hereditary ruling houses; over forty such clans, who acquired political ascendancy during that period, have drawn the treatment of the historians so far. All land was supposed to belong to the ruling chief who parcelled it out among his lieutenants. The latter paid a fixed revenue or tribute and rendered military service to the king in return for the lands granted to them. The village communities were governed by their *panchayats* and enjoyed considerable autonomy in their internal affairs. There was no written law of the land; the rajput states were run on local customs and traditions. The feudal administrative set-up was usually not very elaborate; in most cases, it was not efficient or stable either.

The rajputs were known for their undaunted courage and chivalry. They were honest, generous and hospitable and kept their word. They were simple, outspoken and straightforward people who rejected outright the Machiavellian principles of deceit and treachery in war. They were sometimes generous to a fault in their treatment of the vanquished foe. The rajputs were freedom-loving people with a keen sense of honour and self-respect. They constituted, in fact, the 'sword-arm of Hindustan'. They were great warriors who took to fighting as a sport and smilingly laid down their lives for the honour of their family, clan or the regional leader.

The rajput women enjoyed considerable freedom and respect in the society. They were known for their chastity and devotion to their husbands. There was no *purdah* system among them. They had some freedom in the selection of their husbands too, *swayamvar* was in vogue among the princesses for this purpose. The custom of *sati* was prevalent though not insisted upon. Some of the rajput ladies were educated and took active part in public life. They did not lag behind their menfolk in bravery and heroism. Many of them participated in warfare and fought the enemy, shoulder to shoulder with their menfolk. In time of danger, they displayed courage and fortitude which stands unparalleled in the history of the world. When their warriors were defeated or killed, the rajput ladies sacrificed their lives by

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burning themselves alive or committing suicides *en-mass*, in manifold ways, in order to safeguard their honour and self-respect; it was called the rite of *jauhar*.

The excessively martial character of the rajputs had its dark side as well. Their love for personal freedom, vanity and inflated ego did not permit them to subordinate their interest or pay obedience to their more capable leaders. They lacked political foresight and displayed absence of an overall national consciousness. Terms like 'patriotism', 'motherland' and the 'state' had assumed narrow, parochial or regional connotations with them. As a result, there were constant wars and clannish feuds among them which hampered the growth of national unity and the emergence of a strong national state in India. The various clans went to war or their chiefs fought the duels simply to show off their military prowess or muscle power respectively. They had converted mutual warfare into a sort of sport in which valuable resources in men and material were laid waste and military strength neutralised. Because of these self-destructive and rather suicidal tendencies, the rajputs failed to take concerted action against the muslim invaders.

Social Organisation and Attitudes

The hindus had developed a very complex social structure by the beginning of the eleventh century. They were a caste-ridden society. The four traditional castes, the *chatur varnas*, originally based on occupations, had become hereditary since the dawn of the christian era. These had multiplied like hydraheads into numerous sub-castes and social groups, each standing in isolation from the rest of the society. Toynbee refers to their caste system as a 'social enormity'[30] which had disrupted its social unity; its various castes and sub-castes were divided into watertight compartments; they did not inter-marry nor shared food with one another. People belonging to the same caste or sub-caste but living in different parts of the country gradually developed different social customs and manners, and, ultimately, stopped inter-marrying or dining together. Similarly, people belonging to the high castes suffered from superiority complex; they looked down upon the low-castes and exercised discrimination against them. The multitudes of the hindus, therefore, did not add to their social strength because they stood like a house divided against itself.

30. . . . . .This impact of religiosity upon the institution of caste in India must have aggravated the benefulness of the institution very seriously. Caste is always on the verge of being a social enormity; but when caste is 'keyed up' by receiving a religious interpretation and a religious sanction in a society which is hag-ridden by religiosity, then the latent enormity of the institution is bound to rankle into a morbid social growth of poisonous tissue and monstrous proportions—Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, 12 vols, OUP, 4th impression, 1948, IV, p. 230.

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The brahmans maintained their superiority over all other castes as ever before. The priestly class among them controlled the social life of the people; the multifarious social ceremonies and rituals through which a hindu had to pass from his birth till death (rather after his death too), had reduced him to the position of a captive in the grip of the priests. The brahmans claimed to be the champions of the entire intellectual and spiritual heritage of the land. They concentrated their attention on religion and spiritualism and did not show much interest in scientific studies nor guided the nation in the matter of industrial and technological advancement. The ancient kshatriyas had assumed the title of rajputs while most of the ancient vaishyas had given up agriculture and taken to trade and commerce. The sudras continued to render menial services to the higher castes though many of them had adopted agricultural tenancy and artisans' craft. The untouchables lived outside the towns and the villages.

Most of the people were poor, backward and ignorant of education and learning; they constituted the masses. Having been neglected by the higher castes since ages, they felt demoralised and dejected. They suffered from many social and economic disabilities which made their lives miserable. When the ex-buddhists reverted back to the fold of hinduism, they became the unprivileged masses for whom separate sub-castes of the lower order came into being. The upper classes made their caste structure more rigid so as to prevent their entry into the higher social stratum. Even the artisans' professions came to be treated as separate sub-castes of lower denominations, like the weavers, iron-smiths, oilmen. The rigidity of the caste system made it difficult for an outsider to be absorbed in the hindu society whose growth came practically to a standstill. The ruling elite and the orthodox brahmans shut themselves into the ivory towers of caste system and were cut off from the mainstream of the society or the masses. They failed to provide political, social or true spiritual guidance to the latter. Accordingly, the masses lost interest in the dynastic feuds or rise and fall of the rajput states. No wonder, more than half of the hindu populace stood forth as mere spectators when the rajput rulers had to fight a life and death struggle against the turkish invaders. Their social vision had become so narrow that they did not consider themselves to be responsible for the defence of their own hearths and homes.

As mentioned earlier, the ladies of the ruling elite, particularly the rajputs, enjoyed social freedom but this was not the case with the common Womenfolk; their condition was not satisfactory. They were mostly confined to the four-walls of the houses and depended almost exclusively on the male earning members. The evils of child marriage and infanticide were prevalent. Polygamy was recognised though it was confined to the upper classes because of economic considerations. Widow re-marriage was not encouraged

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which made their lives miserable and added to the burden of the society in general.

The hindus displayed conservatism and narrowmindedness in their general outlook. Alberuni complains that they suffered from some sort of superiority complex[31] with reference to their society and culture. They shunned everything that was alien, dubbed all foreigners as the *mlechhas* and observed total social boycott against them 'be it by inter-marriage or by sitting, eating and drinking with them', because thereby they thought 'they would be polluted.'[32] There is substance in what he says about the Indian attitude. It might have partly been born because of the barbarities perpetrated by the turkish holders of Mahmud of Ghazni on the unarmed and innocent populace, plunder of their hearths and homes and desecration of their holy shrines. There is, however, no denying the fact that, partly because of their long isolation from the outside world, the hindus suffered from ignorance about the developments in foreign countries and hence failed to appreciate the virtues of other peoples. Owing to the peculiar restrictions of the caste system, even foreign travel had become a taboo with them. Alberuni suggests that 'if they (the hindus) travelled and mixed with other nations, they would soon change their mind, for their ancestors were not as narrowminded as the present generation is.'[33] Obviously, the ancient Indian civilisation had lost its innate power of absorption by which it assimilated the best in the various peoples who came into contact with it in the earlier ages. Alberuni tells us that the hindus of the early eleventh century were not even interested in setting their house in order. They never desired to recover or purify a thing once 'polluted' by a foreign touch; they were not allowed by their socio-political leaders 'to receive anybody who does not belong to them, even if he wished to, or was inclined to their religion.'[34] Evidently, it rendered any social connection with them rather difficult; it created a gulf between them and the muslim invaders who deprived them of their independence.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

In the beginning of the eleventh century, hinduism was the predominant religion of the Indians, in one or the other of its

31. ".....folly is an illness for which there is no medicine, and the Hindus believe that there is no country but theirs, no nation like theirs, no kings like theirs, no science like theirs. They are haughty, foolishly vain, self-conceited and stolid. They are by nature niggardly in communicating that which they knew, and they take the greatest possible care to withhold it from men of another caste among their own people, still much more of course, from any foreigners"—*Alberuni's India* (Sachau), I, p. 22.

32. *ibid*; p. 17.

33. *ibid*; p. 22.

34. *Alberuni's India* (Sachau) I, p. 20.

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forms. Islam was confined to the states of Sind and Multan; their *karmatia* rulers had made coversions on a large scale through peaceful means. The muslims had established a foothold in Malabar and some Arab merchants were settled in the Indian seaports also though they did not constitute a separate entity as a cultural group. There was a sprinkling of the parsees along the western coast who though 'a people apart' lived in perfect harmony with their hindu neighbours. Buddhism was at a discount with the rajputs; the buddhist masses in northern and central India were gradually being assimilated within the fold of the hindu society. However, the population of Bihar and Bengal was found to be predominantly buddhist even in the beginning of the thirteenth century, when the turks penetrated therein. The rajputs were devout hindus; they worshipped various mythical goas and goddesses, particularly, *Vishnu*, *Siva* and *Durga* or *Shakti*. The cult of *bhakti* born in the south in the eighth century, had made its appearance in the north but it had not yet shown tangible results in curing the socio-religious ills of the country.

The religious beliefs and practices of the hindus and the buddhists showed a marked degeneration. The priestly class among the brahmans exploited the people in the name of religion; *devadasi* system in the temples was fraught with manifod social evils. The tantric philosophy of mysticism which had found its entry in hindu and buddhist theology as far back as the sixth century, had started showing its ugly results. It encouraged all sorts of superstitions and blind practices through which the crooks, in the garb of spiritual guides, robbed the poor and ignorant masses. The exponents of *vammarga dharma* indulged in 'wine, flesh and women'. The vicious ideas of this cult had permeated the educational institutions too; the *sanyasis* and *bhikshus* were not free from it either. The so-called great scholars exhibited a low taste in their literary compositions; they produced obscure literature on prostitutes and pimps which, instead of generating the reformative forces, justified and encouraged evil practices among the educated. *Guhya samaja*, regarded as an important work on the buddhist tantrics, refers to Mahatma Buddha as 'indulging in acts of debauchery with the angels'. Indian art and architecture was also adversely affected by the religious and moral degeneration of the socio-political leadership.

Indian Economy

On the eve of the turkish invasions, India was known to be a rich country among its neighbours. Gold, silver and the precious stones accumulated in the hindu temples and the treasuries of the rajput princes tempted Mahmud of Ghazni, more than anything else, to launch incessant expeditions to this country. The Indian economy, so, far as its agricultural and mineral wealth was concerned, was quite sound; there was general economic prosperity. Agriculture, which constituted the backbone of the national

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economy, was fairly developed and the land produced enough and to spare. The ruling elite were rich and affluent; the merchant princes (*saudagars*) rolled in wealth. We have, however, reasons to believe that there existed great disparity of wealth between the upper classes and the masses, but it was not something unusual about the Indian society. The villagers who constituted the bulk of the nation lived simple and frugal lives; their standard of living was very ow. We cannot say with certainty if they were better off or worse han what they are today. Bonded labour was prevalent among he agriculturist classes and slavery was practised by the urban hindus, though on a domestic level; these practices bore no comparison with the elaborate system of slavery brought by the muslim invaders to India.

Trade and commerce was well-developed but the currency circulation was minimal because of very low prices. The use of gold and silver was confined to the commercial transactions at the higher level; the masses traded commodities through barter system or its near equivalent.

On the whole, India presented the case of a rich country with poor masses and still poorer defence. Its fabulous wealth, weak political structure and 'petrified society' extended an open invitation to the turks to lay their hands on its poorly defended treasures. It would not be an exaggeration to say that Mahmud of Ghazni came, he saw and he plundered with immunity.

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2

Ghaznavid Inroads

Kingdom of Ghazni

Sabuktagin and his son Mahmud of Ghazni,[1] the turkish invaders from the northwest 'paved the way' for the ultimate conquest of India by muslims. The kingdom of Ghazni was founded (c. 962 A.D.) by Alptagin,[2] once a slave of the Samanid[3] *amirs*[4] of Bukhara. Sabuktagin was, in turn, a slave officer[5] of Alptagin. He ascended the throne in 977 and laid the foundation of Yamini[6] or Ghaznavid dynasty. He was a great warrior. He extended his rule over the major part of Afghanistan and some Persian territories during the reign of twenty years. He also won the friendship of the Samanid ruler[7] by helping him in the suppression

1. Arabic *Ghazna*; Persian *Ghaznin*.
2. Alp Tiagin, a turkish slave of the Samanid ruler Abdul Malik (954-61); was governor of Khurasan. On the death of his patron, there ensued a contest for the throne between two rival claimants. Alptagin, having backed the wrong house, was relieved of governorship. An ambitious adventurer, he left Khurasan with a handful of his followers and established himself at Ghazni by dislodging its Arab chieftain Abu Bakr Lawik.

   Abu Bakr Lawik took refuge with the Hindushahis of Kabul.—Muhammad Nazim, *The Life and Times of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*; Cambridge, 1931, p. 25, fn 5.
3. They claimed descent from Saman, a converted Persian noble from Balkh (previously, a Zoroastrian by faith) who enjoyed the patronage of the Abbasid Caliph Mamun (808-30). An independent Samanid principality came into being at Khurasan in 903; was gradually transformed into an empire which included the whole of Transoxiana; Bukhara was its capital. Though vassals of the Abbasids, the Samanids were virtually independent rulers. Thei power declined towards the close of the tenth century when Bukhara fell into the hands of the I-Lak Khans of Turkistan (990 A.D.); they were finally liquidated by their rivals with the turn of the century.—*JRAS*, Bengal, XV, Part I.
4. The Samanids were styled *amirs*; the same title was taken up later by their Turkish slave officers. Sabuktagin was called the Amir of Ghazni—the Indianized form of the title was 'Hamir'.
5. A slave of Alptagin; rose to be a general. After Alptagin's death (969 A.D.), his son and successor Abu Ishaq expired within a year and was succeeded by three Turkish slave generals of Alptagin—Bilkatagin (969-77), Piretagin or Piray (977 A.D.) who turned out to be a 'villain' and was deposed by the nobles in favour of Sabuktagin.

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of a revolt in Khurasan (c. 994 A.D.). He secured for Mahmud the governorship of Khurasan from his patron.[8]

Jaipal's Encounter with Sabuktagin

Jaipal, the hindushahi ruler of Kabul and Punjab (960-1002), felt alarmed over the growing power of the neighbouring turkish state. He was ever perturbed over raids by the muslim hordes into Lamghan[9] which constituted the border area between their kingdoms. He launched a major attack on Ghazni in 986-87.[10] Unluckily, his army was caught in a sudden hailstorm and heavy rainfall. Hardpressed, he sued for peace on humiliating terms.[11] He is said to have repudiated the agreement on return to his own dominions. Sabuktagin, thereupon, retaliated by carrying a plundering raid into Lamghan. Jaipal called for help from some Indian princes and marched on Ghazni with ' a hundred thousand'[12] troops; they included contingents from the kings of Ajmer, Kalinjar and Kanauj.[13] He was again defeated and taken prisoner. He secured his release by surrendering a big slice of his dominions, including Lamghan and the northwest frontier upto the banks of the Indus.[14] He prepared the pathways and constructed roads on his eastern frontier leading to the Sulaiman ranges

6. Sabuktagin claimed descent from Yazd-Jurd-i-Shahryar, the last emperor of Persia. He was assassinated during the Caliphate of Usman; his family fled to Turkistan and, after a couple of generations, were intermingled with the local inhabitants of the country.

7. Nuh II, the son of Mansur; in recognition of the service, he conferred the title of *Nasiruddin wa'd-Daulah* on Sabuktagin and that of *Saifuddaulah* on Mahmud who had also commanded a regiment in the enterprise,

8. With his headquarters at Nishapur, Mahmud protected the territories from falling into the hands of the old rebel Abu Ali Sunjur, who was still hovering around.

9. It comprised the valleys of Jalalabad and Kabul. Piretagin had launched the first organised attack on the Afghan territories of the Hindushahi kingdom in 977.

   Firishta states that during the very first year of his reign, Sabuktagin plundered the Kabul valley and returned to Ghazni with a huge booty. (Briggs; I, p. 9). Such at acks were carried on without any provocation or expression of hostility by Jaipal.—S.R. Sharma, *The Crescent in India: A Study in Medieval History*, 3rd edition, Bombay, 1966, p. 46.

10. Sabuktagin met his army near a hill called Ghuzak between Ghazni and Lamghan.—Utbi, *Tarikh i Yamini*: *E&D*, II, pp. 19-20.

11. Mahmud, then hardly fifteen, participated in the battle; he urged his father to carry on the struggle till the attainment of complete victory—*ibid*: p. 21.

12. *ibid*; p. 23.

13. Firishta (Briggs), I, p. 11.

14. Sabuktagin is credited with the conversion of the Afghans of the Kabul valley to Islam.—C.V. Vaidya, *History of Medieval Hindu India*; 3 vols; III, Poona, 1926, p. 66.

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and the Khyber pass. These were used later by Mahmud for the march of armies in his Indian expeditions.[15]

The Myth of Undefended Frontier

The encounter of the hindushahis with Sabuktagin had far-reaching effects on the subsequent history of India. The former stood forth as a bulwark against the onslaught of turkish invaders from the northwest; the Khyber pass, frequently referred to as the 'gateway of India' was well within their control. Because of its strategic importance, it must have been protected by them to the best of their capacity. Jaipal was fully confident of the military prowess and defences of his kingdom; that is why he took the initiative and invaded Ghazni, not once but twice. Therefore, the contention of some writers that the northwestern frontier of India was left undefended on the eve of the turkish invasions is wrong. Again, to attribute the successive defeats of Jaipal at the hands of turks to natural calamities or unforeseen circumstances and incidents is also tantamount to misinterpretation of history. The fact is that Jaipal was the most competent of all the Indian rulers who were called upon to fight the Ghaznavids. He played a formidable role in trying to check their advance into India. He also enjoyed full cooperation from the other princes of northern India. If, in spite of all this, he failed, the credit must be given to the turks. Sabuktagin earned his victories by his superior generalship and the use of a better war strategy. The occupation of Khyber pass by him gave a severe blow to the defence of northwestern frontier for all times to come. Sabuktagin was a pioneer among the turks who not only opened the 'gateway of India' but also became its master by establishing a strong foothold on the Indian side of the pass. It facilitated the march of Mahmud of Ghazni on the plains of India without any let or hindrance.

Sabuktagin died in 997 at the age of fifty-six.

Mahmud of Ghazni (998-1030)

Abdul Qasim Mahmud, the eldest son of Sabuktagin, ascended the throne of Ghazni[16] in 998 at the age of twenty-seven.[17] Within

15. *Alberuni's India* (Sachau), I, p. 22.
16. Sabuktagin died on the Balkh frontier while in active command of his army. He had four sons—Mahmud, Ismail, Nasr and Yusuf. At the time of his death, Mahmud was at Nishapur, in charge of the Khurasan army on behalf of the Samanids. Taking advantage of this peculiar circumstance, his younger brother Ismail declared himself Amir of Ghazni and actually ruled over the kingdom for about seven months, until defeated, and taken prisoner by Mahmud. The sultan placed him in the custody of his (Mahmud's) father-in-law and provided him with all the amenities befitting a prince. He hus avoided the horrors of a civil war; it added to his prestige and popularity.
17. b. 971 A.D.; educated in Islamic theology and jurisprudence; well-versed in *Quran* and *Hadis* (Islamic tradition); associated with statecraft and

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a year, he secured recognition from Al Qadir Billah, the Caliph of Baghdad, as the ruler of Afghanistan and Khurasan.[18] The latter bestowed on him the titles of *Amin ul Millat* (Protector of the Muslims) and *Yamin ud Daulah* (The Righthand Man of the Empire). Mahmud thus came to occupy a status, similar to that of the Samanids, his former suzerains, in direct allegiance to the Caliph. He was the first muslim ruler to be credited with the title of the 'sultan'.[19] At the time of his investiture by the Caliph's plenipotentiary, Mahmud took a vow that he would wage *jihad* (holy war) on the *kafirs* (infidels) and organise annual expeditions[20] into India—'the land of idolators'. He could not undertake this work all at once because of a revolt in Khurasan (998-99). A great warrior and brilliant military commander, he carved out a vast central Asian empire by conquests,[21] interspersed with his Indian invasions.

Indian Invasions : Their Nature

Mahmud led seventeen[22] expeditions into India from 1000 to 1027. The number and frequency of these raids throws light on the tireless energy, ambition and fixity of purpose of the invader. He left Ghazni generally at the end of the Indian rainy season, in September-October, and spent the winter here which was not as cold as in Afghanistan. He returned to Ghazni in March-April, before the beginning of the next rainy season,[23] laden with every type of booty, including gold, silver. precious stones, horses, elephants, men and women as salves and all that he and his marauders could carry with them. Having acquired full knowledge of the climate and topography of India, he usually tried to avoid the scorching heat of the northern plains, and particularly the rains which blocked the passage of the armies. Obviously, even

active warfare since boyhood; was appointed governor of Ghazni by his father at the tender age f seven; received governorship of Khurasan (c. 994) from the Samanids.

18. Mahmud annexed Khurasan to his kingdom by defying the authority of the Samanids

19. A.B.M. Habibullah, *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*; Allahabad, 2nd ed; 1961, p. 22.

20. Only seventeen Indian expeditions are credited to him in the thirty-two years of his reign, but it must be acknowledged that he fulfilled the vow which he had taken.

21. His central Asian conquests included: Siestan (1002-4), Gharistan (1011-12), Khawarizm (1014-17) and Ghor (1019-20).

22. *E&D*, II, pp. 434-78. The actual number is difficult to determine on account of the conflicting evidence of contemporay authorities.

23. After each major victory, it might not have been possible for him to return to Gnazni. Similarly, for each fresh exploit, he might not have travelled all the way from Ghazni. In his Mathura-Kanauj campaign, he was held up in the Doab during the rainy season and the expedition thus lasted more than a year.

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the shortest of his campaigns has to be indicated by two years of the Christian era.

Encounter with Jaipal

After the consolidation of his hold over the Ghazni kingdom, Mahmud turned his attention towards the Indian frontier. He initiated the campaign with the dawn of the eleventh century (1000-01). He crossed the Khyber pass and occupied some hill territories and fortresses of the hindushahis in the vicinity of Peshawar.[23] He stayed on the bank of the Indus for a couple of weeks and had a good look at the vast stretch of the Indian plains along the river. He returned after stationing a strong contingent on the Indian side of the pass. This was his first visit to the pass which he garrisoned and made safe for his future expeditions.

Mahmud marched against Jaipal the year following, at the head of 15,000 select cavalry and a large number of *ghazis*[25] and encamped near Peshawar. Jaipal crossed the Indus with 12,000 cavalry, 30,000 infantry and 300 elephants, to meet the invader. The battle took place on November 27, 1001.[26] Jaipal was defeated and taken prisoner along with his chief officers and kinsmen; fifteen thousand of his men lay dead 'spreading like a carpet on the ground' and providing ample 'food for beasts and birds of prey'. Anandpal, the son of Jaipal, who had been left behind at Waihand to look after the affairs of the state, had to pay a heavy ransom[27] to secure the release of his father and others. Jaipal could not bear the disgrace and burnt himself to death on a self-lit pyre. He was succeeded on the throne of Waihand by Anandpal. Mahamud returned to Ghazni whith a huge booty[28] and

24. Including Bannu, Waziristan and the lower valley of the Kabul. Firishta makes a mention of this expedition on the authority of Gardizi, Briggs, I. p. 20.
Gardizi is the only contemporary sour e of our information about this preliminary expedition. *Zain ul Akhbar* (written under Sultan Abdur Rashid of Ghazni, 1049-52); edited by Muhammad Nazim Siddique, Berlin, 1928.

25. The muslim volunteers, unpaid 'plunder-seeking adventurers' especially utilised for *jihad*. According to Clifford Edmund Bosworth, 10,000 *ghazis* accompanied Mahmud in 1001-2 against Jaipal and 20,000 in his Kanauj campaign. Their number was much large on the occasion of the Somnath expedition. *The Ghaznavids : Their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran 994-1040*: Edinburg, 1963, p. 114.

26. Utbi—*E&D*, II, p. 26.

27. 250,000 *dinars* and 50 elephants; Jaipal's one son and a grandson were detained as hostages till the fulfilment of the conditions of the t eaty.—Firishta (Briggs), I, p. 21.

28. According to Utbi, 'the friends of God were not unmindful of t e gold. The necklace was taken off the neck of Jaipal, composed o a ge pea ls and shining gems and rubies, set in gold, of which t.e valu was 20,000 *dinars* and twice that value was obtained from the necks of otne s, *E&D*, II, p. 26.

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a large number of the Indian captives as slaves.[29] This initial victory over hindushahis, the guardians of the northwestern frontier of India, encouraged him a great deal.

Subjugation of Bhatiya and Multan

After the conquest of Siestan (1002-4), Mahmud led his third expedition into India in 1004-5. He marched with his victorious army through Baluchistan, crossed the Indus and started loot and plunder in the Multan region. He met with stiff opposition at the fort of Bhatiya[30] (or Bhatia), situated on the trade route from the Khyber pass to Multan. Its ruler Baji or Biji Rai gave a heroic fight but was defeated; instead of falling into the hands of the invaders, he saved his honour by committing suicide. All the inhabitants of Bhatiya who refused to embrace Islam were put to the sword.

Mahmud returned to Ghazni along the Indus *via* the Khyber pass; his men took time to move and were caught in the rains before they could clear the pass. The swollen Indus and its tributaries took a heavy toll of life and booty of the invaders, who were also pillaged by the Indian tribals. It made Mahmud wiser in planning his subsequent expeditions.

Mahmud led his fourth expedition (1005-6) against Abdul Fateh Daud, the *karmatia* ruler of Multan, dubbed as heretic by the turks. Anandpal refused to give a passage to the invaders through his dominions and had to suffer a heavy loss. Daud capitulated without a fight and pleased Mahmud by the surrender of his treasure, horses and other valuables. He was allowed to retain Multan on the promise to pay annual tribute and follow the principles of the *sunni* faith.

While returning to Ghazni, Mahmud appointed a hindu convert, Nawasa Shah[31] to look after his conquered territories in Hindustan.

About this time, the turks under Ilak khans,[32] invaded Khurasan. Mahmud, therefore, remained busy on his central Asian frontier for about two years. Taking advantage of his long absence, Nawasa Shah renounced Islam and tended to behave as an independent ruler of the northwestern frontier. Daud of Multan

29. Utbi says that five *lakh* people, including 'beautiful women', were taken slaves, evidently after the battle, from the neighbouring countryside. *ibid.*

30. Variously identified as *Bhera*, on the southern bank of the Jhelum in the salt range, *Uchh* or *Bhatinda*; none of these identifications seems to be correct.

31. Sukhpal or Sevakpal, a maternal grandson of Jaipal who had been taken prisoner at the battle of Peshawar in 1301-02.

32. I-Lak Khan was the title of the turkish rulers of Kashghar.

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also began to collaborate with him. The fifth expedition of Mahmud (1007-8) was, accordingly, directed against Nawasa Shah. The latter attempted to escape towards the Kashmir hills but was taken prisoner[33] and deprived of his personal treasure of about four *lakh dinars*.

Victory Over Anandpal and Plunder of Nagarkot (1008-9)

The ever-increasing frequency of Mahmud's raids made Anandpal, the hindushahi ruler, extremely anxious about the safety of his state. All along, Mahmud had been striking at the fringes of the hinudshahi kingdom, subjugating and humiliating the petty chieftains and demoralising their people. Sooner or later the hindushahis must settle their scores with the invader; in spite of the successive defeats having been suffered by its rulers, the hindushahis constituted yet the most formidable stumbling block in the way of Mahmud. Anandpal was fully conscious of the gravity of the situation. Mahmud launched a full-fledged invasion[34] of the hindushahi kingdom in 1008-9 (sixth expedition). Anandpal was prepared to meet the coming danger. He had received some aid in men and material from the rulers of Delhi, Ajmer,[35] Kalinjar, Gwalior and Kanauj. There was great enthusiasm among the people of northern India; many 'hindu ladies sold their ornaments' and 'the poorer among them worked hard at their spinning wheels' to provide money for the soldiers. A united effort was made by the Indians to face the foreigner. The two armies met on the banks of the Indus. Mahmud resorted to strategy to meet the situation. With back to the Khyber pass, firmly secured and made safe for retreat in case of defeat, he entrenched his main army in

33. According to Gardizi, Nawasa Shah died in the prison of Mahmud; but Muhammad Nazim states that he outlived Mahmud, escaped to Kashmir and formed a confederacy of the hill chieftains (1043-44) and attacked Lahore, then a part of the Ghaznavid empire. He was defeated and slain in the battlefield.

34. Muhammad Nazim gives the impression that it was Anandpal who took the initiative in the matter of invasion for 'stemming the tide of the muslim conquest from the northwest'.—*The Life and Times of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*; Cambridge, 1931; New Delhi; reprint, 1971, p. 89.

35. Firishta, (Briggs), I, p. 26.
The Chauhans of Sambhar (later Ajmer) did not come into direct clash with Mahmud. The very town of Ajmer had not yet been founded; it was the Chauhan ruler Ajayadeva of Sambhar who is said to have built the fort of Ajmer and founded the modern town, towards the end of the eleventh century (c. 1093 A.D.). It was named after him as Ajayameru; it was he who shifted his capital from Sambhar to Ajmer. Firishta's statement is, therefore, not correct. By making Chauhans of Ajmer to be a constituent of the Rajput confederacy against the Ghaznavids, Firishta merely makes a surmise, by ante-dating Ajmer owing to its fame in the days of Muhammad Ghori. Similarly, V.A. Smith's observation in the *Oxford History of India* that Visaldeva (Bisaldeva) of Ajmer led the Rajput confederacy against Mahmud in 1008 is also incorrect. There is, however, a probability that the Chauhans of Sambhar had supplied contingents of troops on both these occasions.

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the plain of Chhachh near Hazru on the east of the Indus.[36] The armies remained encamped face to face with each other for 'forty days' without engaging themselves. Meanwhile the troops of Anandpal daily increased in number. Ultimately, Mahmud sent 6,000 archers to provoke the enemy to move forward and attack his entrenchments. It had its desired effect; Anandpal's forces dashed forward and a bloody battle ensued. To quote Firishta, 'during the heat of the battle, 30,000 infidel khokhars, with their heads and feet bare, armed with spears and other weapons, penetrated on two sides—and forcing their way into the midst of the cavalry—slaughtered three or four thousand Muhammedans. They carried their success so far that the sultan, observing their fury retreated from the thick of the fight that he might stop the battle for that day.'[37] Defeat stared him in the face, but, to his good fortune, just at that crucial moment, the wounded elephant of Anandpal got out of control and fled the battlefield, carrying the monarch along with him. It spread panic among the hindu fighters, who treating it as a signal for the flight of their leader, broke the engagement. According to the muslim chroniclers, no less than 8,000 of them were killed in the retreat. This broke the backbone of the national resistance movement against the turkish invader. Mahmud did not stay put at the battlefied after this glorious victory. A part of his army spread over the plains and took possession of the entire upper valley of the Indus, including Waihand. He himself moved speedily, at the head of select cavalry, along the foothills of Punjab, apparently with the object of giving a hot chase to the fugitive hindu soldiers. As a matter of fact, he had a sinister design up his sleeves. To the great chagrin and bewilderment of the hill chiefs, he, all of a sudden, thundered at the gates of Nagarkot (Bhimnagar, modern Kangra) which had one of the most sacred and richest temples of national fame. Mahmud won an easy victory over the defenders of the fortress, plundered the temple as well as the populace and returned to Ghazni 'laden with booty'. The temple alone yielded 700,000 minted gold coins; 700 maunds of gold and silver ingots and jewellery and twenty maunds of precious stones—pearls and rubies of incalculable value. Many rare trophies of the war had never been seen or heard of by the people of central Asia. Mahmud held a grand exhibition of the booty in the imperial lawns at Ghazni for many a week; the ambassadors from the muslim countries and

36. Situated near Attock on the other side of the Indus, it was already in the possession of Mahmud; he thus met Anandpal's forces in his own dominions. C.V. Vaidya, History of Medieval Hindu India; *op cit.*, LI, pp. 49-50.

The battle was not fought in the plain on the west bank of the Indus as held by most of the authors by a misreading of Firishta's reference to 'the plain on the confines of the province of Peshawar'. There is nothing wrong with the statement because the boundaries of the 'province of Peshawar could include territory on the eastern bank of the Indus too.

37. Briggs, I, pp. 26-27.

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the people from far and near poured into Ghazni to have a glimpse of the fabulous wealth.

This made Mahmud famous as a muslim crusader and conqueror of Hindustan—'the golden sparrow of Asia'. He established his undisputed military dominance over northern India and played havoc there during the next two decades;[38] the Indian rulers trembled to hear his name. The Nagarkot exploit provided a clue to the centuries-old accumulated wealth of India in the holy shrines. It sharpened Mahmud's avarice for the precious metal and encouraged him to strike at other famous Hindu temples with a still greater ferocity.

Penetration into Rajputana

In his seventh expedition (1009-10), Mahmud penetrated deep into the heart of India upto Narayan (modern Narayanpur, near Alwar—Rajasthan). Its ruler was defeated and had to part with his entire treasury, armoury and other valuables. He promised further to assist Mahmud with men and material in his future campaigns against the neighbouring rulers.

Annexation of Multan (1010-11)

Next year (1010-11), Mahmud took a punitive expedition (eighth in the series) against king Daud of Multan who had failed to act as his faithful satellite and reverted to 'the old heretic practices'. Daud was taken prisoner and deposed;[39] hundreds of *karmatias*, dubbed as heretics, were put to the sword. Mahmud appointed a turkish military officer as governor of Multan before his return to Ghazni.

Plunder of Thanesar

In his ninth expedition (1012-13), Mahmud laid his hands on Thanesar[40]—'the Mecca of Hindus'. It was then an independent principality. Mahmud knew that, given the warning, millions of Indians might be willing to shed their blood for the protection of

38. In his subsequent invasions, the Indians witnessed 'torrents of barbarians sweeping across' the rich plains of India, 'burning, looting, indulging in indiscriminate massacre; raping women, destroying fair cities, burning down magnificent shrines enriched by centuries of faith; enforcing an alien religion at the point of sword; abducting thousands, forcing them into unwilling marriage or concubinage; capturing hundreds of thousands of men, women and children, to be sold as slaves in the markets of Ghazni and other central Asian markets.' *BVB*, V, p. xii.
39. Daud was sent a prisoner to Ghazni and thence to 'Ghorak' where he died.
40. Gardizi and Firishta give the plunder of Thanesar in 1012-13, though some of the evidence suggests that it might have taken place in 1013-14, after the conquest of Nandana by Mahmud in 1012-13.

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the holy place. He, therefore, kept his plan a closely guarded secret, even from his own camp-followers. As usual, he moved with his well-disciplined cavalry along the foothills of Shivaliks.[41] On reaching the table-land near modern Chandigarh, he made a sharp detour towards Thanesar and took its inhabitants by surprise. On the way, only one Indian chief Rama attempted to check his advance on the bank of a stream and perished with all his men on the battlefield.[41] Before the hindu princes of the neighbouring states could reach Thanesar for its defence, it was all over; the town and its holy shrines lay in ruins—the heaps of debris, covered with rotting corpses. Like a hurricane, Mahmud had made a clean sweep of his target and was already beyond the reach of the hindu forces, treading his way to Ghazni with the same swiftness with which he had come. It was nothing short of a highway robbery, accompanied by unsurpassed vandalism.

Defeat of Trilochanpal : End of Hindushahis

Since the fall of Waihand (1008-9), Anandpal had set up his headquarters at Nandana in the salt range. On his death (c. 1012), Mahmud made a determined bid to liquidate the hindu-shahis. He marched upon Nandana (1013-14 : tenth expedition) at the head of a large cavalry force and besieged the fort. Trilochanpal, the son and successor of Anandpal, left the defences of the fort to his son Bhimpal and himself retreated towards the Kashmir hills. Bhimpal gave a heroic fight to the invader, in the true spirit of his forefathers, but his army was routed by the latter in a pitched battle, fought outside the fort. He escaped to the hills thereafter.[42] Even then the handful of the besieged Shahi soldiers refused to surrender until Mahmud planted mines under the walls of the fort and threatened them with total annihilation. An Indian convert named Sarog was appointed governor of Nandana by him.

In 1015-16 (the eleventh expedition), Mahmud invaded the Kashmir valley. Trilochanpal and his son Bhimpal gave him a slip and returned to Punjab to salvage whatever portion of their territories had escaped the fury of the invader. Mahmud laid

41. The foothills of Shivaliks, where the town of Chandigarh is now situated, lay on the route of Mahmud's armies, while marching to and from the Gangetic valley. There is every reason to believe that he used his area as a halting place where his men relaxed for a while after having covered a long distance on the onward or the return march. It was from here that he took the route along the modern highway between Kalka and Ambala while marching upon his pre-determined targets. He seldom moved through the central Punjab for this purpose so as to avoid all physical or human obstacles which might impede his progress.

42. Probably, he was th ruler of Thanesar itself who gave the turks a battle not in the immediate vicinity of Thanesar, but at some distance, on the banks of a stream.

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siege to the fort of Lohkot (Loharin) but the besieged garrison gave a stubborn fight and compelled the invader to raise the siege. Severity of winter, accompanied by heavy snowfall incapacitated Mahmud's army. It lost its way in the vales and hills and was reduced considerably in numbers. This was, incidentally, the only expedition of Mahmud which proved unsuccessful.

It would be appropriate to narrate here the subsequent efforts made by Mahmud to finally liquidate the hindushahi dynasty. Chronologically, these were intervened by some other campaigns of Mahmud. After encamping in the neighbourhood of modern Sirhind for a shortwhile, Trilochanpal shifted to Lahore which became the capital of the hindushahis. The people of central Punjab rallied round him in thousands, ready to lay down their lives for the defence of their homeland. Mahmud also could not rest at ease until he had delivered a final blow to the hindushahis. He invaded Lahore (1021-22) during his fourteenth expedition and gave yet another defeat to Trilochanpal. Lahore fell into the hands of the invader as also 270 war elephants. The whole of Punjab upto the bank of the Sutlej was declared annexed to the Ghazni empire. Trilochanpal escaped once again and attempted to form a junction with Vidyadhara, the chandela prince of Kalinjar (Bundelkhand). On his way, Trilochanpal was probably assassinated by some of his own selfish men who had become sick of his unending struggle against the turks. His son Bhimpal outlived his father by six years without claiming any royal title. With his death (c. 1026) as a fugitive, the hindushahi dynasty came to an end.

Plunder of Mathura and Kanauj

To resume the main story, after his unsuccessful expedition to Kashmir, Mahmud remained busy for about two years (1016-18) on his western front which proved to be a temporary lull before the terrible storm that he let loose over the Gangetic valley in 1018-20. He invaded Kanauj (twelfth expedition), then ruled by Rajyapal. the Gurjara-Pratihara chief. On the way, Hardutt, the king of Bulandshahr (*Baranunder*) surrendered without a fight; he embraced Islam along with his ten thousand soldiers. Kulchand, the ruler of Mathura, lost 50,000 of his soldiers at the battlefield of *Mahavana.* Instead of falling into the hands of the invaders, he saved his honour by committing suicide along with his wife. Mahmud desecrated about one thousand temples in Mathura and its neighbourhood. His forces spread themselves in the Gangetic Doab, carrying fire and sword wherever they went. Rajyapal fled Kanauj on the approach of the invaders. According to Utbi, the latter ransacked and destroyed 10,000 temples in that region. Mahmud carried back with him two million gold coins, invaluable quantities of gold, silver and precious stones, 350 elephants and 53,000 hindu slaves. Rajyapal was permitted to take charge of his kingdom as a vassal of Mahmud.

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Campaign Against Gwalior and Kalinjar

On Mahmud's return, Rajypal reappeared in Kanauj, to be hated and despised by his people. The chandela king Ganda of Kalinjar, in collaboration with the ruler of Gwalior, put Rajypal to death for having brought dishonour to the country by his act of cowardice. Mahmud, therefore, directed his next expedition (1020-21 ; the thirteenth in series) against Kalinjar. On the way, he laid siege to Gwalior but failed to conquer it. Its ruler Kirtiraja of the Kachhapaghata clan, accepted nominal suzerainty of Mahmud and got rid of him by offering thirty-five war elephants only.

According to Gardizi, Ganda *raja* challenged the invader with 1,45,000 infantry, 36,000 cavalry and 640 elephants; he was supported by some other hindu chiefs. Before the actual fight, Ganda became, however, suspicious of treachery on the part of his colleagues and fled the field at night, leaving behind immense baggage and armoury which fell into the hands of the invaders; the booty included 580 war elephants also. Ganda took refuge in the fort of Kalinjar which was promptly besieged by Mahmud. In spite of his best efforts, he failed to conquer it and was obliged to raise the siege on the offer of 300 war elephants[43] by the chandela. About this time, Vidyadhara, the illustrious son of Ganda, seems to have been in charge of the Kalinjar fort who pleased Mahmud of Ghazni by sending him a self-composed poem in praise of his suzerain. The campaign against Gawalior and Kalinjar was not very successful. Mahmud returned to Ghazni in a hurry so as not to be caught in the rainy season in the midst of the unbeaten hindu rulers and hostile population.

Plunder of Somnath (1025-26)

The most outstanding invasion (fifteenth) of Mahmud was directed against the Somnath temple,[44] situated on the sea-coast in the extreme south of Kathiawar.[54] Somnath being a harbour, the sea-faring people carried the tales of its fabulous wealth to the muslim world. Mahmud felt tempted to plan the greatest and the most daring exploit of his life with the twofold object of acquiring its wealth and winning fame and glory as an

43. Gardizi (p. 80) writes that Ganda sent these elephants without *mahavats* to test the competence of the turkish warriors to control them which they did with remarkable ease to the bewilderment of the 'infidels'.

44. 'Master of the Moon' (*soma* means the moon). According to hindu mythology, the god *Somanatha* was worshipped by the moon.

45. Utbi does record this expedition; his account concludes with the defeat of Trilochanpal (1020-21); Utbi died in 1029 A.D.
Kamil ut Tawarikh of Ibn Asir is the earliest contemporary source of our information on this expedition. *E & D*, II, p. 468.
Firishta's account is full of fables which got currency much later.

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'idolbreaker' among his co-religionists.[46] He left Ghazni at the head of sixty to eighty thousand crusaders, including 30,000 of his well-organised cavalry and the *ghazis*; it was the maximum force ever commanded by him on any single occasion. He reached Gujarat *via* Multan and Ajmer, piercing his way through the waterless desert of Rajputana[47] where the slightest miscalculation, misdirection or mishap could mean the total ruin of his army and the end of his career. Mahmud brushed aside strongholds of the rajputs to save time and energy. He arrived at Somnath[48] in mid-January 1026. The battle of Somnath lasted three days. The defenders of the town offered stubborn resistance for two days ; on the third day, Mahmud's army was surrounded by thousands of hindu fighters who rushed from far and wide to defend the holy shrine. A bloody carnage ensued in which Mahmud ultimately won the day. About 50,000 of the defenders fell fighting. The victory was followed by sack of the temple as well as the town and general slaughter of the populace. It is said that Mahmud entered the temple and broke the idol, a *Siva-linga*[49] with his mace to earn the title of an 'idol-breaker' (*butshikan*).[50] The magnificence of the temple[51] and the booty acquired by

46. The hindus of Gujarat were fed on the mistaken belief that the deities of northern India had fallen victims to the turks because they had lost the patronage and sympathies of *Somanatha*, the greatest of the gods. When Mahmud heard of it, he decided to lay his hands on the temple of *Somanatha*.

47. Every man was required to carry enough water, food and fodder for his horse to last for many days. Three thousand camels, laden with additional food-supplies and water, accompanied the army to meet any contingency.

48. The muslim chroniclers record that on the approach of Mahmud's armies, the hindus of Somnath assembled on the rampart of the town and their house-tops to watch them; and foolishly believed that the *mlechhas* would be annihilated by their Lord *Somanatha* for the sins which had been committed by them on the Indian soil.

49. The *lingam* was fifteen feet long, of which six feet were below and nine above the ground. Alberuni says that it was made of solid gold.—Sachau, II, p. 103.

    Firishta's story that the idol was hollow from within and full of precious stones, worth crores of rupees, which burst forth on the first strike by Mahmud, is not accepted by Mohammad Habib, *Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni*; S. Chand, 9nd ed., 1951, p. 57.

50. It is said that Mahmud was requested by the priests not to break the main idol in return for immense wealth. Mahmud spurned the offer, however, and said that he would rather like to be known as 'Mahmud—the idol-breaker, (*butshikan*) than 'the idol-seller' (*but-farosh*). Gardizi does not mention it nor does Ibn Asir; Habib, therefore, regards it a mere fable. *ibid*; p. 53.

51. The temple was a spacious edifice. It stood on a raised platform of stone-slabs; the pyramidal roof of the *shikhar* was made of thirteen storeys and was surmounted by fourteen golden domes. The main building was supported by fifty-six ornamented pillars. A chain of gold with bells, weighing twenty *maunds*, was hung in a corner of the temple. It was pulled at prayer hours to inform the priests and devotees. A thousand brahmans worshipped the idol continuously. The idol was washed with

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Mahmud therefrom defy all descriptions and calculations.[52] After pillage, the temple was razed to the ground and set on fire.

Mahmud did not stay at Somnath for more than two weeks; he hastened back to Ghazni with men and beasts laden, with booty. In order to evade the rajputs, who were ready by this time to block his passage, Mahmud moved swiftly through Gujarat, the Rann of Kutch and Sind. Anhilwara, the capital of Gujarat, fell into his hands without a fight; its ruler Bhim Deo was besieged in the fort of Khandah. Mahmud was fascinated by the pleasant climate of Gujarat and the richness of its people and the soil. While at Anhilwara, he expressed the desire, for the first and the last time, to stay there and carve out an Indian empire. His suggestion met with strong opposition, however, from his lieutenants and the soldiers who were eager to reach back home at the earliest.[53] His army met with some resistance from Bhim Deo and some other chieftains and also suffered much in the Rann of Kutch and the Sind desert. It was pillaged too by the Jats of the lower Indus valley. He reached Ghazni in April 1026. Mahmud acquired a worldwide fame by this exploit; his name became a legend in the muslim world. He sent huge quantities of gold and silver and presents of incalculable value to the Caliph, who, in turn, congratulated him and bestowed royal titles on two of his sons. He also conveyed to Mahmud that any of his nominees would receive Caliph's recognition as the rightful successor of his vast dominions.

In 1026-27, Mahmud led a punitive expedition against the Jats in the lower valley of the Indus who had obstructed his path on return from Somnath the year before. Mahmud got constructed at Multan 1,400 boats with pointed warheads for this purpose. The Jats used 4,000 small boats of reed against the invader but perished in the first naval action ever fought by Mahmud. His last expedition was also directed against some rebels of Punjab.

Mahmud died in 1030 after a brief illnes at the age of fifty-nine.

the 'water of the Ganges' brought from hundreds of miles away. Five hundred *devadasis* (dancing and singing girls) and two hundred musicians were in the service of the temple; three hundred barbers were employed to shave the heads and beards of the pilgrims. The temple establishments was endowed with 10,000 villages by the Indian princes and men of means.

52. It is said that the sultan's share alone amounted to twenty millions of gold dinars besides other invaluable treasures, which constituted only one-fifth of the total spoils. Accordingly, the value of the spoils in modern currency would come to billions of rupees.

53. Mahmud appointed Dabshilim (Devasarun), an ascetic of Somnath and an uncle of Bhim Deo, the ruler of Gujarat, to be the governor of Anhilwara; but he was overthrown soon after Mahmud's return.

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Objectives and Fulfilment

Mahmud was a great conqueror; he had imperialistic instinct though he cannot be called an empire-builder. He acquired vast territorial possessions *albeit* it was not his aim to establish his sway over India. That is why his campaigns were usually directed against big towns and rich temples. He did not attack military installations and well-defended forts unless it became impossible to avoid them. After the conquest of Mathura and Kanauj, northern India lay at his feet but he lacked the acumen to bring it under his permanent control. The defeated Indian princes acknowledged him sometimes as their overlord and held out promises to pay the annual tribute but none took it seriously—neither the victor nor the vanquished.

Mahmud annexed Punjab, including Lahore and Multan, to the empire of Ghazni as a matter of expediency. It protected the lines of communication and facilitated the movement of his armies into the heart of India for plundering raids. The very fact that Lahore was annexed by him rather very late (1021-22) after more than two decades of his successful military career, mitigates against the imperial motives of Mahmud.

Mahmud's declared objective in carrying out repeated raids into India was the propagation and glorification of Islam. It could not be achieved by the way he and his camp-followers behaved towards the Indian populace while on plundering sprees. Most of his expeditions were in the nature of highway robberies wherein he outdid the barbarians in the display of vandalism towards the vanquished. A few modern historiographers have advanced the argument that Mahmud needed a lot of money to raise the army for the expansion of a vast central Asian empire; the author does not agree with them. It was not a needy man looking for money in the holy shrines; Mahmud was a greedy man who lived for money and died for it. The base elements of greed for the precious metal and the temptation to destroy the grand edifice of a civilised society could bring no credit to him or to his creed.[54] Of course, he knew it well that by raising the cry of *jihad* against the 'infidels' he could muster a large number of recruits from all over the muslim world, willing to join him as *ghazis* or volunteers in his expeditions. His attacks on the hindu temples served both the purposes—acquisition of wealth and fame as an idol-breaker.[55]

Through personal experience, Mahmud had learnt to neutralise the destructive power of the enemy's war elephants; all the same

54. 'Mahmud was no missionary; conversion was not his object'. Habib, Mahmud of Ghazni; *op. cit.*, p. 77.

55. 'Mahmud took...all that centuries of Indian industry had accumulated, and left the Indians to rebuild, as well as they could, the ruined fortifications of their cities and the fallen altars of their gods. He obtained the gold and the prestige he needed and he aspired for nothing else'. *ibid.*

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he was fascinated by them and developed a peculiar craze to acquire them from the defeated Indian princes as trophies of war. He, thereby, built a strong contingent of over 2,500 of such elephants. They were freely used in his central Asian wars; they struck awe and terror in the hearts of those at least who had never seen them before. Repeated Indian expeditions ensured a steady supply of the beasts; but to say that he launched the campaigns with the object of acquiring the war elephants would be to place the cart before the horse.

Mahmud was one of the greatest military generals the world has ever produced. He was a born soldier, fearless crusader, courageous and resourceful; he seldom lost a battle. Through his brilliant military exploits, he carved out a name for himself in the history of central Asia. He was no barbarian at home; he was a patron of art and learning; a galaxy of scholars, poets and artists adorned his court and received liberal patronage from him. They included, among others, Alberuni, Baihaqi, Utbi, Firdausi, Unsari—the poet laureate, and Farabi—the philosopher. Ghazni and its people benefited immensely from their monarch and his fabulous wealth. He spent lavishly to make his seat of governance one of the finest cities of Asia. He erected magnificent mosques and huge palaces; established a university, a library and a museum which stored invaluable trophies of war and laid beautiful gardens and parks in Ghazni.

Mahmud was, however, not a great statesman, nor a good ruler. He left behind a mighty army and the royal treasury full to the brim; but he failed to utilise material resources to consolidate the gains of his victories. He failed to evolve an efficient administrative hierarchy to run the government. He is not credited with the establishment of any socio-cultural or political institutions of lasting nature. He showed no interest in public welfare or nation-building activities. His autocratic and extremely self-willed behaviour did not allow freedom of expression and action to his ministers and the ruling elite. They lost all initiative and sought their safety in paying unquestioned obedience to the dictates of their master.[56] The sultan never brooked any difference of opinion on any issue. To the *ulama* (*mullas*) who were expected to exercise some check on his actions as a ruler, he had assumed the role of a Ghazi, the champion of Islam. None else dared to give him a wise counsel on administrative and state matters even when it was most needed. All the time he was busy

56. Sabuktagin had a very brilliant and capable minister Abul Abbas Fasih Ahmad. He worked 'marvels in the administration of the state and the army'. Mahmud confirmed him in his post but, within two years, picked up a row with him over the possession of a turkish slave. The minister was dismissed and put to death at the instigation of some self-seeking nobles. After this episode who could dare to give a wise counsel to the Sultan in state matters?

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with his military engagements and did not pay proper attention to the problems of law and order in his dominions. There was no police force, vested with specific civil powers, to protect the life and property of the subjects. His was a pure military dictatorship under which the people enjoyed no civil liberties. That way, he left a very bad legacy behind; what he did not accomplish during his lifetime, could not be done by his successors. The grand edifice raised by him crumbled down to pieces sooner than expected. His weak successors lost all that had been secured by Sabuktagin and Mahmud; they were compelled to seek refuge in India as the regional rulers of the Punjab. The conquest and annexation of the Punjab thus proved to be the only worthwhile gain of Mahmud's Indian expeditions.

Effects of Mahmud's Invasions

Mahmud's invasions shook the entire political fabric of northern and western India. The hindushahis, the heroic defenders of Punjab and the northwestern frontier perished; Khyber pass, the Gateway of India, was lost to the foreigners forever. The powerful and proud rajput princes were defeated, humiliated or liquidated, resulting in the disintegration of their states. The political division and disunity of the country was exposed The defective military structure and poor leadership took a heavy toll of the martial talent; thousands of brave fighters laid down their lives in battlefields; those who survived felt thoroughly humiliated and demoralised The citizens were massacred in cold blood by the marauders who took thousands with them as slaves, to be sold in the markets of Baghdad, Samarkand and Bukhara. Flourishing cities were laid waste; magnificent temples were desecrated and plundered; and the centuries-old edifices of art, architecture and culture were ruined. The entire habitats were razed to the ground and millions of people rendered homeless and hearthless while within their own country. Quite a few were forcibly converted to Islam. Long after the departure of Mahmud, northern India must have presented the picture of a vast refugee camp. The problem of resettlement of the uprooted people must have baffled the petty chieftains who lacked moral courage, resources and foresight to help their subjects. One shudders to think of the sad plight of the unfortunate Indians of those days who did not have the benefit of a country-wide national government to look after their interest and soothe their injured sentiments. A whole civilisation was fatally wounded and left bleeding. In the Ghaznavid invasions, the country witnessed a dreadful holocaust. Had it the capacity to produce a Chanakya or Chandragupta Maurya it might have changed the course of history and fate of its people? Only time could tell. How the political and social leadership of the country responded to this challenge, forms the subject-matter of the next chapter.

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3

Between The Two Holocausts

(1030—1175)

Northern India

Northern and western India was ravaged by the turks in the first quarter of the eleventh century. A number of mighty Indian rulers were beaten hip and thigh by Mahmud of Ghazni. After the conquest of the Indo-Gangetic valley (1018-22), he could have established himself as the imperial monarch of India if he had so desired. In not doing so, he afforded a golden opportunity to the leadership of ancient India to overhaul the political set-up of the country. The regional princes were given a chance to *rally* and be prepared to defend their independence against future foregin onslaughts.

After the death of Mahmud, India enjoyed respite for over a century and a quarter (1030-1175) from foreign invasions. More than enough time was thus allowed to the Indian princes and the public to shed their regional outlook and set their house in order on national considerations. That seemed to be the only way to safeguard their national independence and project their hearths and homes. The account that follows gives the performance of the regional rulers and throws light on the political developments which took place in India during the period 1030-1175.

(a) Muslim States of Northwestern India

Punjab was annexed to the ghaznavid empire by Mahmud in 1022; it remained under their control upto 1186. Khusrau Shah (1152-60), one of Mahmud's successors, was driven out from Ghazni (c. 1158) by the Ghuzz turks; he retreated to Punjab and became purely a regional ruler of India, with Lahore as his capital. The northwestern frontier, including Rawalpindi, was a part of his kingdom. Its southern and southwestern boundary remained, however, constantly fluctuating because of conflict with the neighbouring hindu chiefs. Hansi was lost to the tomars of Delhi, and from the latter it was snatched by Bisaldeva (c. 1153-63), the chauhan ruler of Ajmer. He fortified it as an outpost against the turks. A few years later, Prithvi Raj (II) chauhan recovered

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Bathinda. Khusrau Shah was succeeded by Khusrau Malik (1160-86) who proved to be the last ghaznavid ruler of Lahore.

Meanwhile, Ghazni was conquered by Ghiasuddin of Ghur from the Ghuzz turks in 1173. He put it under the charge of his younger brother Shihabuddin Muhammad and permitted the latter to expand his dominions and govern the conquered territories as he pleased. The latter, ultimately, conquered Punjab and annihilated the ghaznavid dynasty.

Multan and Sind had been conquered and handed over to his military officers by Mahmud. After the annexation of Lahore, these were put under the overall charge of ghaznavid governor of Punjab. Soon after the death of Mahmud, Multan regained its independence under the hereditary *karmatia* dynasty. Uchh also seems to have been taken over by them from the ghaznavids. Similarly, a local tribe, called the Sumras, established themselves in Sind and secured their independence from the ghaznavids; Debal was their capital. They were *shia* muslims of an obscure origin.

Northwestern India thus came to have three independent muslim states on the eve of Muhammad Ghori's invasions. The fury of Mahmud's plundering raids over, the hindus of northwestern India adopted a liberal and rational outlook towards the muslims. The muslim rulers of Lahore, Multan and Sind received recognition as the regional powers, to be treated at par with the other Indian princes. The hindu converts to Islam, within the jurisdiction of the rajput states, were shown consideration ; they were allowed to follow their newly adopted creed without any feeling of ill-will or jealousy being exhibited by the hindu public or their rulers. The muslim rulers were, however, conscious of their precarious position in the company of mighty rajput princes. In order to ensure their survival, they usually maintained an aggressive posture towards them. Given an opportunity, they did not hesitate in striking at the neighbouring hindu states and, sometimes, penetrated deep into their dominions.

(b) Delhi, Ajmer and Kanauj

The Foundation of Modern Delhi : According to Tod, the town of modern Delhi (*Dhillika*) was founded, near the ruins of the pre-historic city of *Indraprastha* of the *Mahabharata* period, by Anang Paul, a tumar (*tuar* or *tomora*) rajput chief who claimed descent from the *Pandavas*.[1] His original name was Bilandeo, who

1. J. Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*; 2 vols; London, 1829; revised edition by W. Crooke, 1920—Indian reprint, 1957, 1, p. 207. The founder has left his name in the village of Anandpur, situated near the original site of Dhillika, located by the Suraj Kund tank, a couple of miles from Tughluqabad.—Percival Spear, *Delhi—A Historical Sketch*; OUP, 1937; Indian reprint, 1945, p. 10.

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styled himself as Anang Paul after assuming the royal dignity.[2] This name was always included in the dynastic title of each successive tumar chief, but only the founder and the last ruler of the dynasty were actually called by it in suppression of their original names.

There is a wide difference of opinion regarding the date of the foundation of Delhi. The tumar rajputs lived in the Gangetic valley, before its plunder by Mahmud of Ghazni ; they were uprooted by the turks ; and, instead of running away from the field of combat, they made a settlement at Delhi, probably after 1020.[3] The region seems to have been devastated by Mahmud's forces and deserted by the local populace in about 1018-19 ; the sturdy tumar rajputs dauntlessly occupied the fertile lands along the Yamuna on the very route of the invaders and, indirectly, throve on the turkish invasion,[4] so to say.

Anang Paul I and his successors ruled over Delhi as independent sovereigns for over a century. The muslim chroniclers record that, in 1043, some hindu princes of northern India formed a confederacy under the leadership of the *raja* of Delhi with the object of liberating Punjab from the ghaznavid rule but were not successful. This 'raja' of Delhi' was, obviously, a ruler of the tumar dynasty.

Triangular Contest for Supremacy : The tumar rulers laid claim to the sovereignty of *Aryavarta* on the basis of their pedigree. The emergence of a powerful kingdom of Delhi was not in the interest of the gahadavalas of Kanauj as well as the chauhans of Sambhar (later Ajmer), both of whom claimed to be the imperial rulers of northern India. Delhi was, accordingly, under military pressure from its mighty hindu neighbours almost continuously ; it was also under constant threat from the ghaznavids of Punjab.

The Imperial Chauhans : The chauhan kingdom of Sambhar flourished under Vakpati II (1003-33) and his brilliant successors. Raja Ajayadeva, the son and successor of Prithvi Raj I, built the

2. The title was derived from Ananga, one of the names of *Kama*—the Hindu god of love. (cf; Greek Cupid).
3. P. Spear, Delhi—A Historical Sketch; *op. cit.*, p. 10.
   Gabrielle Festing says that the town was founded by Anang Paul I in 730 A.D., but was abandoned after a few generations. It was repeopled probably by one of his scions and a namesake in 1052.—*When Kings Rode to Delhi*; London, 1912, p. 28.
   On the testimony of Tod, Adolf Waley places the date of its foundation at 993 A.D., in the form of an ordinary village.—Adolf Waley, *A Pageant of India*; (1926), Indian reprint, Delhi, 1975, p. 122.
   In that eventuality, the town of Delhi might have become the headquarters of an independent principality after Mahmud's invasions.
4. Just as the sikhs in Punjab did during the days of Ahmad Shah Abdali's invasions.

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fort and the modern town of Ajmer (*Ajayameru*) in c. 1093 and transferred his capital from Sambhar to that place.[5] His son and successor Arnoraja repulsed a muslim attack from Sind.[6] The next famous ruler Vigraharaja IV *alias* Visala or Bisaldeva (c. 1153-63) was a great warrior and an empire-builder. He crushed the muslim invaders and defeated many rajput chiefs; and carved out a vast kingdom which stretched from 'the foothills of Himalayas to the Vindhyas'. He defeated the tumar monarch of Delhi, the twentieth ruler of his line,[7] and secured the territory of Hansi from him; the town had earlier been conquered by the tumars from the ghaznavids of Lahore.[8] Bisaldeva had conquered Delhi, *albeit* he did not annex it. As a farsighted statesman, he preferred to enter into a matrimonial alliance with the tumar chief; his principality of Delhi was allowed to exist as a buffer between his own dominions and the ghaznavids. The tumar ruler had two daughters but no male issue. He had already given his first daughter in marriage to Bijayapal (1154-70), the fourth gahadavala ruler of Kanauj; the second daughter Ruka Devi was offered by him in marriage to Somesvara, a nephew of Bisaldeva.[9] The subjugation of Delhi turned the chauhans of Ajmer into an all-India power. Thereafter, 'their independence became identified with the independence of Aryavarta'. Standing at the entrance of *Madhyadesa*, they had perforce to accept every challenge to Indian independence and culture and repel the enemy who attempted to destroy these.[10]

Bisaldeva was succeeded by his son Apara Gangeya but the latter was deposed by Prithvi Raj II, one of his cousins (a son of Jugodeva and grandson of Arnoraja, the predecessor of Bisaldeva). The reign of Apara Gangeya and Prithvi Raj II, popularly known as Rai Pithora, lasted about six years. Rai Pithora won significant victories against the muslim neighbours. He was succeeded by his uncle Somesvara, the son of Arnoraja.[11]

5. Tod, *Rajasthan*, I, p. 207; also, Dashratha, *Early Chauhan Dynasties*; S. Chand, 1959, p. 40.
6. Arnoraja was murdered by one of his sons, by his sindhi wife, before 1153 A D. This patricide, identified with Jugodeva, ruled for a short while and was supplanted by his younger brother Vigraharaja IV or Bisaldeva. *BVB*, V, p 82.
7. Tod, *Rajasthan*; I, pp. 207-8; Waley, *A Pageant of India*; p. 122.
8. Dashratha Sharma, *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, p. 90.
   Most of the writers have all along been attributing the conquest of Hansi by Bisaldeva direct from the ghaznavids of Lahore; their statements need to be corrected on this account.
9. Somesvara was the son of Arnoraja by a chalukya princess, Kanchandevi.—*BVB*, V, p. 88.
10. Dashrath Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 60.
11. Jugodeva was the son of Arnoraja by his s ndhi wife; whereas Somesvara was his son by his chalukya wife, as stated elsewhere in this study. Jugodeva and Somesvara were thus half brothers whose families entered in to fratricidal struggle with the object of acquiring the throne.

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Prithvi Raj Chauhan (1177-92): Prithvi Raj III, the famous chauhan ruler of Delhi and Ajmer, who clashed with Muhammad Ghori (1189-92), was the illustrious son of king Somesvara (1169-77) by his tumar wife Ruka Devi.[12] It is said that Prithvi Raj was brought to Delhi at the tender age of eight and reared by his maternal grandparents. Anang Paul adopted him as an heir to his kingdom in a formal public ceremony with great rejoicing. Prithvi Raj grew up into a fine youngman of extraordinary qualities of head and heart. He was a born soldier and a courageous and fearless warrior. He ascended the throne of Ajmer on the death of his father in 1177. He was then hardly seventeen; therefore, he was placed under a council of regency. Within a year, however, he assumed the reins of government in his own hands. He was a capable and popular ruler who had many exploits to his credit. When he came to Delhi in 1182 after the conquest of Mahoba from the chandelas, Anang Paul, then too old to carry on the administration effctively, abdicated in favour of his maternal grandson and proclaimed him the 'Emperor of Bharata'.[18] He stood as a bulwark against Muhammad Ghori till his heroic death in the battlefield of Tarain in 1191 A.D.

Kanauj: As recorded in the previous chapter, Rajyapal, the last gurjara-pratihara ruler of Kanauj was put to death by the Rajput princes of Gwalior and Kalinjar in about 1020. His successors, however, continued to hold some territory with their headquarters at Bari, in the vicinity of Kanauj, till 1090 when their estate was overrun[14] by the gahadavala rajputs.

After Mahmud's second campaign in the Gangetic valley (1022-23), a Rashtrakuta prince, Chandra established himself at Kanauj in c. 1027. The fourth ruler of his line, Gopala, suffered defeat at the hands of a muslim army led by another Mahmud, the ghaznavid governor of Punjab (1086-90) at the bidding of the sultan of Ghazni. Gopala[15] was, finally, knocked out in 1089-90 by Chandradeva

12. Chand Bardai in *Prithvi Raj Raso*, quoted by Tod in *Rajasthan*, II, p. 365; also.
Gordon Hearson, *The Seven Cities of Delhi—A Description and History*; Thacker & Spink, Calcutta & Simla, 1928, pp. 9-10.
V.A. Smith had made a wrong statement that Prithvi Raj Chauhan was the son of a Chedi princess.—See *Early History of India*, pp. 387-88.
D.C. Ganguly had accepted Smith's version in "The Struggle for Empire", *BVB*, V, p. 104.
As a matter of fact, Somesvara had two wives, one a Kalachuri princess of Chedi, and the other a tumar princess. Obviously Smith had confused the issue and refuted Chand Bardai's version without verification of facts.
13. Adolf Waley, *op. cit.*, p 125.
14. The gurjara-pratihara rajputs continued to have their existence as petty chieftains in Rajputana and Malwa also.
15. After being turned out of Kanauj, he set up a small principality at Vadamayuta (mod. Badaun). The scions of Govindachandra seem to have acted on as feudatories of the gahadavalas. The last rashtrakuta chief

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(c. 1089-c. 1103) who laid the foundation of the gahadavala dynasty at Kanauj.[16] The heart of the Gangetic valley, from Varanasi to Delhi, including the regions and towns of Kashi (Benaras), Kaushal (Oudh) and Kaushik (mod. Allahabad) were included in his dominions.[17] The fourth ruler of the gahadavala dynasty, Vijayachandra (1154-70), had married a tumar princess, as stated earlier. Their offspring was Jaichand who ascended the throne of Kanauj in c. 1170 after the death of his father. He was jealous of his cousin Prithvi Raj, who was of the age of his children, because the latter had been appointed an heir apparent to the throne of Delhi by their maternal grandfather, Anang Paul. After ascending the throne of Ajmer (1177 A.D.), Prithvi Raj turned Jai Chand into an enemy by carrying off his daughter Sanyogita[18] (or Sanyukta) from her *swayamvar*. Jai Chand did not go to the aid of his son-in-law when the latter entered into a life and death struggle with the turkish invaders under Muhammad Ghori. Prithvi Raj Chauhan sacrificed his life in the defence of the country; Jai Chand fell a victim to the same invader, a little later.

(c) Other Regional Kingdoms

Gujarat and Malwa : Bhimdeo I, the chalukya ruler of Anhilwara, re-established his sway over Gujarat soon after the departure of Mahmud of Ghazni. His suceessors continued to rule over Gujarat throughout the eleventh and the twelfth centuries. Jaisingh Siddharaja (1102-43) was by far the greatest ruler of the dynasty who defeated the parmars of Malwa, the guhilot rajputs of Chittor, and conquered Kathiawar. He came into conflict with the chauhans of Ajmer as well, but tasted defeat at their hands. Mool Raj II ruled at Anhilwara on the eve of Muhammad Ghori's invasions.

The parmars of Malwa with their capital at Dhar rose into prominence under their greatest ruler Bhoja (c. 1010-55). After his death, their possessions shrank into a small principality. They were feudatories of the chalukyas of Gujarat at the time of Muhammad Ghori's invasions.

Bundelkhand : As stated earlier (chap. 3), the chandela ruler Ganda and his son and successor Vidyadhara had put up a successful resistance against Mahmud of Ghazni, although Vidyadhara

Lakhanpala was defeated and put to death by Qutubuddin Aibek in 1202. He appointed Iltutmish, later a famous sultan of Delhi, to be the first muslim governor of Badaun.

16. Roma Niyogi, *The History of the Gahadavala Dynasty*; Calcutta, 1959, p. 43.
17. *ibid*; p. 47.
18. The romantic story of Sanyogita's marriage with Prithvi Raj Chauhan, as narrated by his court bard Chand Bardai, has been doubted by some of the modern scholars on flimsy grounds.

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was constrained to accept nominal suzerainty of the invader. His successors held their sway over Bundelkhand for more than a century; their dominions comprised Mahoba, Kalinjar, Khajuraho and Jhansi. Madanvarman Chandela (c. 1129-65) defeated the parmars of Malwa and annexed Bhilsa. He killed the kalachuri chief Gayakarna of Chedi (Tripura) in an engagement and made the kalachuris his feudatories.

Soon after, the chandelas themselves were beaten by the gahadavalas of Kanauj. Madanvarman was succeeded by his grandson Parmardi Deva (c. 1165-1202) who was defeated by Prithvi Raj (III) Chauhan in c. 1182 and compelled to part with a big slice of territory, including Mahoba, to the latter. In 1202, Qtubuddin Aibek invaded Kalinjar; Parmardi Deva submitted to him after a brief struggle but was put to death by his minister Ajayadeva, for having shown cowardice.[19]

Bihar and Bengal : The Pala dynasty of northern Bengal continued its existence with varying fortunes till the last quarter of the twelfth century. Its later rulers Kumarapala (1126-30) and Madanpala (1130-50) were weak and inefficient, during whose period their kingdom was reduced to a petty principality. Meanwhile, the dawn of the eleventh century saw the rise of a Sena dynasty in eastern Bengal. Its rulers are said to have hailed from the south. Vijaya Sena (1097-1159) annexed large slices of the Pala territories. He waged successful wars against the rulers of Kamrup and Mithila (northern Bihar). He was succeeded by yet another powerful king Ballala Sena (1159-70.) His son and successor Lakshmana Sena was ousted by the turks under Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khalji.[20]

Assam : The successors of Brahmapala, the ruler of Kamrup, continued to rule undisturbed throughout the eleventh century. One of them, Indrapala, has been described as *Prachi Pradipa*—'the light of the East'. The last ruler of his line was Pushpabhadra who was overthrown by one of his generals in the first quarter of the twelfth century. After a brief interval of political instability, one Vaidyanath emerged as the sovereign ruler of Kamrup. One of his successors, Vallabhadeva gave a crushing defeat to Bakhtiyar Khalji in 1205. The rulers of Kamrup were able to retain their independence against heavy odds throughout the early medieval period.[21]

19. *BVB*, V, p. 59.

20. For details, refer to Charles Stewart, *The History of Bengal From the First Mohammedan Invasion Until the Virtual Conquest of that Country by the English, A.D. 1757*: (Oriental), Indian reprint, Delhi, 1971.

21. The muslim rulers of Bengal continued to exert military pressure on Kamrup. Ghiyasuddin of Lakhnauti made an unsuccessful attempt to conquer Kamrup in 1227. Thirty years later, Tughril Khan of Bengal invaded the Brahmaputra valley but was defeated and taken prisoner.

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The kingdom of Sylhet, situated in the lower valley of Brahmaputra, was conquered by Sikander Khan Ghazi during the period of Firoze Tughluq.

The ahoms, an off-shoot of the shan tribes of Burma, migrated to eastern Assam in the first quarter of the thirteenth century.[22] Their tribal chief Sukapha set up an independent state with headquarters at Charaideo in 1253. It were they who gave the name Ahom or Assam to the whole northeastern region of India.

An Evaluation of the Political Condition

From the account that has been given above, we come to the conclusion that there was no qualitative change in the political set up of the country on the eve of the second holocaust wrought by the turks. The country was divided, as usual, into petty regional states. The Indian political leadership exhibited a lack of creativity in tackling the problem of national defence. Once the foreign danger was over, numerous rajput chiefs jumped into the field to measure their swords in the traditional feudal style. Some of them were ambitious and successful warriors but devoid of statesmanship or diplomatic skill to earn recognition as the imperial rulers of the country ; while majority of them proved to be the typical feudal lords of average capabilities who exhibited parochial or clanish outlook. They were at daggers drawn with each other and wasted their valuable resources in man and material in internecine wars. Even within their own dominions, they often failed to provide adequate relief to the uprooted and badly mauled subjects needing rehabilitation. They did not lack the resources perhaps, *albeit* they proved themselves void of creative thinking and moral courage to guide the people. As a result, India presented an equally dismal picture in 1175 when the turks struck the country for the second time, now under the leadership of Shihabuddin Muhammad of Ghur or Ghor, better known as Muhammad Ghori. Torn by mutual jealousies, dissensions and other self-destructive tendencies, they failed to take concerted action against the invaders and, in the consequence, were crumbled to dust, in quick succession, under the iron heels of the turks.

The Defunct Military System

The military system of rajputs was out of date and old-fashioned. There was no dearth of military talent or fighting skill

He died a captive and his army was totally annihilated. Long afterwards in 1337, Mahmud Shah of Bengal also made an abortive attempt to conquer Kamrup.

22. Nirmal Kumar Basu, *Assam in the Ahom Age: 1228-1826*; Calcutta, 1970, p. 17.

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in the country but the rajput princes exhibited utter lack of imagination in the matter of military organisation. An average rajput soldier took pride in displaying his muscle-power and personal fighting skills but their leaders failed to harness them into a compact and well-disciplined army on the bases of uniform methods of training and provision of better armaments. The rajput armies suffered from lack of unitary command ; these were led by their own feudal lords who sometimes did not cooperate or coordinate their efforts with one another. The pride, prejudice and the inflated ego of a rajput forbade obedience to a leader belonging to another clan or region. At many critical moments when concentrated and unified action was needed in a battlefield for the attainment of success, the rajput commanders pursued their individualistic plans and whims and thus neutralised the advantages that they possessed over their foe. The rajput chiefs failed to keep themselves abreast of the latest developments in war strategy that had been taking place in other countries, nor did they make any contribution towards the development of its techniques. The hindu soldiers fought mainly with swords and spears while the muslims were excellent archers ; the former fought mostly on foot while the latter used efficient cavalry.

The excessive dependence upon the war elephants and their use in the advance guards proved disastrous for the rajputs. The beasts fled in terror when attacked fiercely by the turkish cavalry force, and trampled their own armies under their feet. Mahmud of Ghazni was fascinated by the sight of mighty elephants; he secured no less that 2,500 of these from India and made a much better use of the beasts on the war fronts in central Asia.

The deep-rooted evil of caste system among the hindus restricted military duties to a particular class ; and the great mass of the people were rendered psychologically unfit for military service. They did not take interest in the political-cum-military revolution that shook the country to its very base. Every time the rajputs strove their best to check the advance of the invader but, unsupported by the national will and the people at large, they failed to hold out for long against the incessant attacks of the turks. The mighties of the mighty chiefs collapsed after a couple of military debacles ; very often a single battle or the sudden death of the rajput leader was enough to signal total subjugation or annihilation of the entire kingdom.

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4

The Second Holocaust

(1175—1205)

The Shansabani Dynasty of Ghur

The real founder of the turkish rule in northern India was Shihabuddin *alias* Muizuddin, better known as Muhammad Ghori. He belonged to the ruling house of Ghur in Afghanistan. The mountainous region of Ghur or Ghor comprised the west-central part of modern Afghanistan between Ghazni and Herat. A small principality was set up by a tajik chieftain of the Shansabani[1] family in the tenth century. It was conquered and made feudatory[2] by Mahmud of Ghazni in *circa* 1009 A.D.

After Mahmud's death, the ghaznavid empire disintegrated quickly under his weak successors. The seljuk[3] turks deprived them of central Asian possessions while, within Afghanistan, they faced the most serious challenge from the ghurids or ghoris. There ensued a long struggle between the ruling houses of Ghazni and Ghor for the dominance of Afghanistan.[4] A highlight of this

1. The tajiks were probably of Persian origin. Shansab, the founder of the dynasty was said to be a descendant of Zuhak, a legendary Persian hero.
2. It was Muhammad bin Suri of Ghur who was subjugated by Mahmud of Ghazni. Utbi calls him Ibn Suri and tells us that he was a 'Hindu'. Perhaps, the word 'Hindu' was used by Utbi as a general term for 'pagan'—Refer to Muhammad Habib & Khaliq Ahmad Nizami (ed.), *A Comprehensive History of India*; Vol, V—"The Delhi Sultanat", People's Publishing House, 1970 (abbreviated hereafter as *Comp. HI*), p. 147, fn.
3. Seljuk, a chief of the ghuzz turks or turkomans (inhabitants of the Kirghis steppes of Turkistan) set up an independent principality in the region of Bukhara in the tenth century. His successors crossed the Oxus and conquered Khurasan and other central Asian territories of the ghaznavids. after the death of Mahmud. Thereafter, they marched on to Persia
4. Bahram Ghaznavi murdered Malik 'Qutubuddin Hasan of Ghur. Hasan's brother Saiffuddin retaliated; he defeated Bahram and held possession of Ghazni for a short while till its reconquest by the ghaznavids.

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struggle was temporary occupation of Ghazni by Alauddin Husain[5] of Ghor, nicknamed *Jahansoz*—'the world burner', who plundered the town and then set fire to it. The fire which raged for about a week, razed to the ground many magnificent monuments, erected by Mahmud and his successors. It gave a death-blow to the power and prestige of the Ghaznavids. They recovered Ghazni from the ghoris but were driven out from there soon afterwards (c. 1158) by the ghuzz turks (or turkomans).

In 1173, Ghazni was conquered from the ghuzz turks by Ghiyasuddin[6] of Ghor, son of Bahauddin Sam, and nephew of Alauddin Jahansoz. The victorious army was led by his younger brother Shihabuddin Muhammad Ghori. He received appointment as governor of Ghazni and was permitted by Ghiyasuddin to govern and expand his dominions as he pleased. Muhammad Ghori thus became virtually an independent ruler, *albeit* he continued to show loyalty and allegiance to his elder brother during his life time and struck coins and read the *khutba* in his name.

Indian Campaigns of Muhammad Ghori—His Objectives

After consolidating his hold over the kingdom of Ghazni, Muhammad Ghori directed his attention towards the conquest of India. Like Mahmud of Ghazni, he also led several expeditions over a long period of thirty years. He was an ambitious and capable military general, though not a genius like Mahmud of Ghazni. He had strong imperial instincts. Unlike Mahmud, his main objective was to establish an empire in India. The expansion of Islam and his ambition to glorify his name through his military exploits could be said to be his secondary aims.

Loot and plunder was definitely not his aim *albeit* he took care to acquire enough gold and silver as booty or tribute from the vanquished chiefs. It helped him in raising a strong army for the defence of his afghan dominions against the onslaught of Khwarizm Shahs.[7]

As a shrewd empire-builder, Muhammad Ghori did not pursue his campaigns ruthlessly nor in quick succession. Instead,

5. The youngest brother of Saiffuddin and Hasan; died in 1161.
6. Saiffuddin II, the son and successor of Alauddin Jahansoz was supplanted by his cousin Ghiyasuddin in 1163.
7. Khwarizm (mod. Khiva), a vast region of central Asia; bounded on the west by the Caspian, on the east by Bukhara and the Oxus, and on the south by Khurasan. It was conquered by the ghaznavids from the Samanids; and from them it was snatched by the seljuks. Ever since the days of the Samanids, the local governor of Khwarizm was styled Khwarizm Shah. One of these governors, named Anushtegin, declared himself independent of the seljuks, towards the end of the eleventh century. At a much later time, Alauddin, the Shah of Khwarizm (1199-1220), annexed Khurasan from the ghurids, the successors of Muhammad Ghori. In 1214, he conquered Ghazni and knocked the ghurids out of Afghanistan.

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he launched every expedition with a set plan to serve his imperial interests, and after every conquest, took pains to establish firm military and civil hold over the acquired territories before taking the next step forward. A couple of times, he received crushing defeats at the hands of his enemines ; nevertheless, his personal failures and shortcomings in resources did not waver him in his faith as an empire-builder. He displayed an extraordinary patience, courage of conviction and fixity of purpose in the face of difficulties. He fully exploited the weaknesses as well as virtues of his rajput adversaries and laid the foundations of a powerful muslim state in northern India.

Conquest of Multan, Sind and the Punjab

A novelty regarding Muhammad Ghori's campaigns was that he did not use the Khyber pass as the route for making an entrance into India as had been done by Mahmud of Ghazni. Instead, he selected the Gomal pass, situated to the west of Dera Ismail Khan which was found to be 'the safer and shorter route'.[8] It was possibly because of two reasons. The Khyber pass had been strongly defended by the ghaznavid rulers of Lahore after they had been turned out of Afghanistan by the ghuzz turkomans. Secondly, Muhammad Ghori intended to avoid direct clash with the Ghaznavids. His plan seemed to be to penetrate into Sind and Gujarat and from there into central India, thus encircling the ghaznavid dominions ; and, subsequently, compelling the latter to acknowledge his suzerainty.

By virtue of the new route adopted by him, the kingdoms of Multan and Uchh were 'the first to fall on his way'. These were conquered by him from the *karmatia* rulers in 1175. He brought the conquered territories under his effective military control and set up an efficient civil administration there.

With Multan as the springboard, Muhammad Ghori led an attack on Gujarat in 1178 but was given a crushing defeat by its chalukya ruler, II ; the turkish army perished in this misadventure.

Thereafter, Muhammad Ghori had to revise his plans and make an all-out effort to conquer Punjab from the ghaznavids. In 1179, he made a dash through the Khyber pass, repulsed the ghaznavid forces and occupied Peshawar. He converted it into a strong military base for the defence of the pass from the Indian side.

In 1181, Muhammad Ghori invaded Lahore for the first time. He failed to take it but forced a treaty on Khusrau Malik who had to send his infant son as a hostage to the invader to

8. *BVB*, V, p. 117.

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ensure the implementation of the treaty. It gave him a temporary respite from the hostility of the ghaznavid ruler. Muhammad Ghori utilised this opportunity to march upon Sind. He led a surprise attack on Debal and forced the Sumras to acknowledge his suzerainty in 1182. He acquired a huge booty as well as tribute from Sind.

Muhammad Ghori marched with an army, in 1185, from Peshawar along the foothills and conquered the northeastern fringe of Punjab, including the town of Sialkot. The latter was, obviously, a pistol, aimed at the heart of Lahore ; Khusrau Malik could ill-afford to lose it. He laid siege to Sialkot soon after Muhammad Ghori's return to Afghanistan. He was assisted in this enterprise by the khokars of the salt range. Muhammad Ghori was, therefore, called upon to invade Punjab for the third time. Khusrau Malik raised the siege of Sialkot and shut himself in the fort of Lahore. Muhammad Ghori promptly laid a siege to it but it was defended gallantly by the ghaznavid soldiers. Finding his victory in doubt, Muhammad Ghori resorted to treachery. He pretended to open dialogue with Khusrau Malik and release his son who had been taken hostage by him five years earlier. Khusrau Malik was taken captive by the ghurid soldiers as soon as he came out of the fort. After this mishap, the besieged garrison surrendered the fort without a fight. Punjab was declared annexed to the ghurid empire and the Ghaznavid dynasty came to an end. Khusrau Malik was sent as a prisoner to Ghor and was put to death along with his captive son in 1192.

Conflict with Prithvi Raj Chauhan III

After the annexation of Punjab, Muhammad Ghori made Lahore the base of his operations against the rajputs. He made thorough preparations for three years before challenging Prithvi Raj Chauhan III of Delhi and Ajmer. In 1189, he stormed Bathinda (Tabarhind), which then constituted a defence-post of the chauhan kingdom, and compelled the besieged garrison to surrender before the arrival of reinforcements from Delhi. Muhammad Ghori stationed 12,000 cavalry there under the charge of a turkish noble with the instructions to hold on against the rajputs for a couple of months until his return from Ghazni with a fresh army.[9]

First Battle of Tarain (1191 A.D.): Prithvi Raj Chauhan had taken no notice of the rise of the ghurid power in Ghazni nor did he feel perturbed when Muhammad Ghori acquired control over Multan and Lahore. He had retained Ajmer as the seat of his governance even after 1182 when he inherited the tumar kingdom of Delhi from his maternal grandfather. He had appointed his younger brother Govind Rai as the governor of Delhi. Prithvi Raj came to know of the intrusion of the turks into his dominions and

9. *Comp. HI, V*, p. 159.

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the fall of Bathinda through an official party sent by Govind Rai from Delhi. Thereupon, Prithvi Raj set out with a huge army from Ajmer to punish the intruders; the contingents of Govind Rai and some other rajput chiefs joined him on the way to Bathinda.[10] Obviously, much of the valuable time was lost in making all these preparations. Meanwhile, Muhammad Ghori, who had mustered reinforcements from Lahore and Ghazni, decided to challenge Prithvi Raj Chauhan within the latter's dominions. He encountered the rajputs at Tarain in early 1191 but suffered a crushing defeat at their hands. There is a sharp controversy regarding the location of the site of the battle. A.B.M. Habibbulah accepts Cunningham's identification of the place with a village called Torvan, situated between Bathinda and Sirsa.[11] Firishta wrote that Tarain was also known as Taraori; accordingly, Elphinstone located it between Karnal and Thanesar.[12] As regards the details of the battle, Minhajus Siraj states that, in their face-to-face fight, 'Govind Rai threw a javelin at Muhammad Ghori and severely wounded his arm. The sultan turned round his charger's head and retreated. Due to the agony of the wound, he was unable to remain steady on horseback and was about to fall on the ground when a lion-hearted warrior, recognised him, sprang up (on the horse) behind the sultan, and, supporting him in his arms, urged the horse with his voice and brought him out of the field of battle'. Firishta gives, however, a different account of the episode. He writes that the wounded sultan lay unconscious in the battlefield among the dead and the dying soldiers and was picked up by his slaves at night. 'During the night, they carried him on their shoulders by turns. Next morning, they reached their camp and placed him in a litter'.[13]

The victorious rajputs laid siege to Bathinda; the besieged turkish army held out for thirteen months before laying down arms. It is a sad commentary on the poor military organisation and the defective war strategy of the rajputs that they took so long to get back their own fort from the hands of the turks who had conquered it from the former in a single sweep a shortwhile ago.

Second Battle of Tarain (1192 A.D.): Muhammad Ghori took his lieutenants to task for the debacle of Tarain; he publicly humiliated the ghurids, the khaljis and the khurasani amirs but spared the afghans as a matter of expediency. Many of these nobles languished in jails until they were released next year on having shown their eagerness to participate in the war against the rajputs and wipe out

10. According to Firishta, he commanded two lakh cavalry, 30,000 elephants and was accompanied by 'all the *ranas* of hind' (Briggs; I, p. 57); obviously, the statement is not correct.
11. A.B.M. Habibbulah, *Foundation of the Muslim Rule in India; op. cit;* p. 326.
12. *History of India*, edited by E.B. Cowell, 1889, p. 355.
13. Refer to *Tabaqat i Nasiri*, pp. 118-19 and Briggs' *Tarikh i Firishta*, I, p. 57.

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the stigma of the previous defeat. According to Firishta, Muhammad Ghori was 'so overwhelmed with a sense of grief and humiliation that he would neither eat nor drink. He did not go to his wife and did not change the clothes that he wore next to his skin. Day and night, he spent in preparation to fight Prithvi Raj Chauhan. Then after a year's preparation, 'all at once, he took the road to Hindustan',[14] the adversaries met at Tarain once again to settle their accounts; Muhammad Ghori employed clever tactics to defeat the enemy. His four divisions of 13,000 mounted archers engaged the rajputs from all the four sides, including their rear. They had special instructions not to come very close to the enemy but to exhaust the rajput patience and energy by scattered engagements; and make an orderly retreat if pressed hard on any front. The reserves were kept by him at a distance of several miles from the scene of action; he did not give an opportunity to the enemy to gauge his real strength. When the rajputs were nonplussed and disorganised by the day-long skirmishes and tactics of the over-fleeing turkish archers, Muhammad Ghori thrust the reserves into the battlefield and made a clean sweep of it. The entire rajput army was destroyed ; Govind Rai fell fighting while Prithvi Raj fled the field but was caught and beheaded immediately or a little later.

The fall of Prithvi Raj Chauhan proved disastrous for the rajputs. Thousands of the gallant warriors were killed at Tarain; the vanguard of rajput defences in the northwestern India was liquidated. It exposed the incorrigible weakneses of their military and political set up and encouraged the turkish invaders to penetrate deep into the Gangetic valley.

Conquest of Delhi

The turkish victory at Tarain did not lead, however, to the fall of Delhi and Ajmer all at once. These towns were defended stubbornly by those who had escaped the fury of Tarain. Muhammad Ghori, therefore, deputed his brilliant slave general Qutubuddin Aibek to take charge of the army of occupation and himself returned to Ghazni.

Qutubuddin Aibek set up his military headquarters at Indraprastha, near Delhi and exerted his military-cum-diplomatic pressure over the rajputs to acknowledge the overlordship of Muhammad Ghori. He extended support to Govind Raja, a young and inexperienced son of Prithvi Raj Chauhan, to be the ruler of Ajmer but attempted to create disse sions among the rajputs by advancing the claims of a tumar prince ov r Delhi. The rajputs also adopted a conciliatory attitude towards Aibek *albeit* they did not fall into his trap. Hari Raja, a brother of Prithvi Raj Chauhan, and an experienced general, supplanted his nephew at Ajmer and launched a military campaign to regain control

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14. Briggs *Tarikh i Firishta*, I, p. 58.

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over the lost dominions. However, the appearance of a turkish army in the vicinity of Ajmer foiled his plans Ajmer was left in the hands of Govind Raja who acknowledged suzerainty of the turks.

Qutubuddin Aibek was anxious to conquer Delhi first. He cut it off from Ajmer by taking possession of the highway between the two and then laid siege to the fort of Delhi (1193 A.D.). Hard-pressed, the besieged rajputs vacated the fort after a couple of months and escaped through the enemy lines by making a sudden assault.

Penetration into the Gangetic Valley

Flushed with victory at Delhi, Qutubuddin Aibek led his army into the Doab (the region lying between the Yamuna and the Ganges) and conquered Meerath (mod. Meerut ; 1193 A.D.) which belonged to the gahadavalas of Kanauj. Thereafter, he laid siege to Baran (Bulandshahr) but the besieged hindu garrison offered stubborn resistance and compelled the turks to raise the siege. About this time, Aibek was recalled to Ghazni by his master Muhammad Ghori, who had already given his daughter in marriage to the former. Aibek stayed in Ghazni for about six months and then returned to Delhi in early 1194 after receiving special instructions from Muhammad Ghori regarding their future line of action. He launched a massive campaign of conquest in the Doab Baran and Koil (mod. Aligarh) were conquered by him (1194 A.D.) before the arrival of Muhammad Ghori with a well-equipped force of 50,000 horsemen. Aibek's contingent made a junction with him and the combined armies marched towards Varanasi (Benaras). Jai Chand, the gahadavala monarch intercepted them at a place called Chandwar on the Yamuna between Etawa and Kanauj. A bloody battle ensued in which the rajputs had an upper hand all through the day. Jai Chand, seated on a mighty elephant, led the attack. Towards the evening, a chance arrow struck him in the eye and he collapsed. This was a signal for the rajputs to disperse, thus converting their 'possible victory into a decisive defeat.'[15] A large number of the rajputs who had fled the battle-field took shelter in the fort of Kanauj. Harish Chandra, son of Jai Chand, declared himself the *raja* of Kanauj and made appropriate arrangements for the defence of the capital. With the death of Jai Chand, the backbone of the gahadavala resistance had been broken but it was not possible for the turks to lay their hands on the whole of the Gangetic valley.

15. Barani styles *raja* Jai Chand of Kanauj as the "'Rai of Benares' and explains the battle scene thus:
The Rai of Benares who prided himself on the number of his forces and war elephants, seated on a lofty *howdah*, received a deadly wound from an arrow, and fell from his exalted seat to earth. His head was carried on the point of a spear to the commander, and his body was thrown to the dust of contempt.—*Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; *E&D*, II, Aligarh reprint, p. 221.

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Muhammad Ghori, therefore, did not confront the rajputs at Kanauj; instead, the turkish army hastened towards Varanasi where the imperial treasury of the gahadavalas was situated, all the habitats enroute being put to plunder. Varanasi and Asni were pillaged and military posts set up there. Muhammad Ghori left for Ghazni thereafter with 1,400 camels laden with booty—primarily gold and silver. Aibek was left behind with the instructions to add to his territorial possessions slowly and steadily.

The Conquests of Qutubuddin Aibek

Qutubuddin Aibek faced numerous revolts and other difficulties in maintaining his hold over the newly acquired territories in the Gangetic valley. He not only suppressed these revolts with an iron hand but also expanded the boundaries of his dominions. The credit for the conquest of Ajmer, Kanauj and Kalinjar from 1195 to 1203 goes to him.

The Dor rajputs of Koil (Aligarh) revolted but were suppressed with ease. Benaras and its adjoining territories were lost to the gahadavalas of Kanauj. Hari Rai Chauhan acquired control of Ajmer from his nephew Govind Raja and re-established himself as an independent ruler. He sent an army to liberate Delhi. Aibek intercepted it near Ajmer itself and compelled it to retreat to the fort, which was promptly besieged by the turks. The rajput desperadoes offered a dogged resistance and perished to a man in the struggle; their chief Hari Rai performed *jauhar* and ended his life instead of falling into the hands of the turks. The conquest of Ajmer was a great achievement of Qutubuddin Aibek. He appointed a turkish governor with a strong military force at Ajmer.

Muhammad Ghori brought a fresh army from Ghazni in 1195-96 to reinforce his Indian garrisons. It was placed at the disposal of Qutubuddin Aibek. Bayana was conquered (1196 A.D.) and put under the charge of turkish noble. Gwalior was besieged but its rajput chief Sulakshana Paul held out and, ultimately, got rid of the turks by the offer of a nominal submission. The turkish governor of Bayana, however, continued to exert pressure upon Gwalior which was conquered by him between 1197-1200.

The chauhan inhabitants of the Ajmer region did not reconcile themselves to the loss of Ajmer, once their imperial seat of governance. They made yet another effort to liberate it with the help of the merh rajputs of Malwa and the chalukya volunteers from Anhilwara. They defeated the turkish garrison of Ajmer. When Aibek rushed to its support, he was also defeated and obliged to seek shelter within the fort. The chance arrival of a fresh contingent from Ghazni, however, compelled the rajputs to raise the siege.

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Qutubuddin Aibek retaliated by invading Anhilwara (1996-97). In an action, 15,000 rajputs died fighting while 20,000 were taken prisoners and enslaved. Anhilwara was sacked though the turks were turned out of Gujarat soon afterwards by the chalukyas. Undeterred, Qutubuddin carried fire and sword into the heart of central India. The chauhans were compelled to surrender all the important footholds in the neighbourhood of Ajmer. In despair, they migrated further south and set up new states of Kota, Bundi and Sirohi.

Aibek conquered Badaun (1997-98) from a rashtrakuta prince and appointed Iltutmish, one of his slave officers, to be its first muslim governor. In 1198-99, he turned out the gahadavalas from Kanauj and reconquered Benaras.

In 1202-03, Aibek invaded Bundelkhand. The chandela ruler Parmardi Deva was besieged in Kalinjar for many months. Out of despair, he prepared to submit to the turks but his prime minister Ajayadeva put him to death out of indignation and assumed leadership of the chandela freedom fighters. They continued the struggle against the besieging army for quite sometime but were, ultimately, constrained to evacuate the fort when its water supply was cut off by the enemy; they were permitted a safe passage by the turks. After their victorious entry into Kalinjar ; the turkish armies acquired control of Khajuraho and Mahoba as well. The defeat of the chandelas established the dominance of the turks in central India.

Penetration into Bihar and Bengal (1197-1205)

The turkish arms penetrated into Bihar and Bengal through the enterprising efforts of Ikhtiyaruddin Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khalji, a brilliant officer of Qutubuddin Aibek. After the fall of the kingdom of Kanauj, Bakhtiyar Khalji was granted an estate in the Gangetic valley along the western borders of Bihar, a Buddhist province. On his own initiative, he started plundering raids into Bihar and, within four or five years occupied a large part of it. He enjoyed full support from Aibek in this enterprise. He sacked and destroyed the buddhist monasteries, including that of Nalanda, and put thousands of the *bhikshus* to the sword. Many of them fled to Tibet and Nepal.

In 1199, Bakhtiyar Khalji led an attack on Nadia (Nudiah Nudea, or Navadwipa), the capital of the Pala ruler Lakshamansena of Bengal. The latter fled the capital without a fight;[16]

16. Minhajus Siraj narrates the story as follows:
Muhammad Bakhtiyar...suddenly appeared before the city of Nudia with only eighteen horsemen, the remainder of his army was left to follow. Muhammad Bakhtiyar did not molest any man, but went on peaceably and without ostentation, so that no one could suspect who he was. The people rather thought that he was a merchant, who had

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but he and his successors continued to rule over a part of Bengal long aftewards. He died in 1206. Nadia was sacked by the turks and a few districts of Bengal (Malda, Dinajpur Murshidabad and Birbhum) were occupied by them. Because of local resistance, Bakhtiyar Khalji could not retain his hold over Nadia and made Lakhnauti or Gaur as his capital. Having become over-confident of the turkish arms, Bakhtiyar Khalji invaded the Brahmaputra valley with 10,000 horsemen. The Assamese tribesmen surrounded them from all sides and destroyed the whole army; the Khalji chief returned to Lakhnauti with hardly a hundred turkish survivors. Terribly shaken by the grief, he fell ill and was done to death by one of his men in 1206.

The Last Days of Muhammad Ghori (1203-06)

Ghiyasuddin, the elder brother of Muhammad Ghori died in 1203 and the latter acquired an independent status as a ruler. He assumed the title of Muizuddin. The last two years of his reign were full of troubles and misfortunes. He suffered a humiliating defeat in 1205 at the hands of the shah of Khwarizm. Soon afterwards, he heard the news of a revolt by khokhars in central Punjab. Hardpressed, Aibek appealed to Muhammad Ghori for help. The latter came to Punjab, crushed the revolt and helped Aibek in restoring law and order. On his return journey to Ghazni, he was encamped at Dhamyak (district Jhelum) on the Indus when a party of the khokhar dare-devils stealthily entered his tent[17] and put him to death on March 15, 1206.[18]

A Character Estimate

Muhammad Ghori was a man with a vision. He made a correct estimate of the decadent political structure of India and visualised the establishment of a turkish empire here by all means. It was the mission of his life and, needless to say, he fulfilled it by virtue of his strong will-power and persistent efforts. Instead of concentrating all the powers in his own hands, he diversified the military function and resources among his capable officers and gave them freedom to chalk out their schemes of action. He

brought horses for sale. In this manner he reached the gates of Rai Lakhmaniya's palace. when he drew his sword and commenced the attack. At this time, the Rai was at his dinner...All of a sudden a cry was raised at the gate of his palace and in the city. Before he had ascertained what had occurred, Muhammad Bakhtiyar had rushed into the palace and put a number of men to the sword. The Rai fled barefooted by the rear of the palace, and his whole treasure, and all his wives. maidservants, attendants,and women fell into the hands of the invader.—*Tabaqat i Nasiri*; *E & D*, II, pp. 305-06.

17. For detailed story, refer to Minhaj, *Tabaqat i Nasiri*, *E & D*, II, p. 294.

18. Muhammad Ghori, Bakhtiyar Khalji and the Raja Lakshmaniya of Bengal, all died the same year (1206 A.D.).

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extended whole hearted support to them in their enterprise and came to their rescue with men and materials in time of need. He thus converted the scheme for the establishment of turkish rule in India into a corporate activity of all his generals. He richly rewarded those who won laurels and reprimanded the incapable officers who were quickly replaced by the more enterprising youthful upstarts. As a general, Muhammad Ghori was no match for Mahmud of Ghazni but he was also not an autocratic, high-headed and self-willed leader like Mahmud. Muhammad Ghori did not inspire awe but confidence among his generals and extracted their collective wisdom in the pursuit of his clear-cut imperialist ideals. He gave full credit to his lieutenants for their accomplishments and did not eclipse their stature by the imposition of his own personality cult. This was a unique characteristic of Muhammad Ghori which he had acquired as a social heritage from his elder brother Ghiyasuddin of Ghur. With no male heir to succeed him, Muhammad Ghori did not reserve the fruits of his achievements for the royal household and personal favourites but shared these with all the nobles and slave officers who had played their role in carving out the Ghori empire. He was an empire-builder *par excellence.*

Causes of Success of the Turks

Toynbee, while analysing the circumstances leading to the fall of the great civilisations, expresses the view that no 'foreign invasion' had ever been the cause of their collapse; 'it simply gave the *coup d'grace*'.[19] The decadent political structure, the defunct military organisation, the stagnant Indian society with its inherent socio-religious defects and economic imbalance which created a gulf between the masses and the socio-political leadership, have been discussed in detail in the foregoing pages of this book. These carried the seeds of decay of the pre-muslim Indian society and its rajput leadership. It was plagued, particularly, by the self-destructive characteristics—the neglect of a sound political-cum-military machinery of collective self-defence, the lack of feeling of over-all national consciousness and mutual warfare.[20] No wonder, it stood a very poor chance of survival in the struggle against the turkish invaders.

19. In the terminology of Toynbee:
The criminal intent of...the turks may have been fully as heinous as is co monly alleged; but there is reason to doubt the effectiveness of their criminal action; for there is reason to believe that the alien body social into which they plunged and replunged their swords was the body of a suicide whose life-blood was already ebbing away through a self-inflicted wound.—*The Study of History*; *op. cit*; IV, p. 71 & 98-100.

20. To quote Toynbee again:
...we observe that, about the middle of the twelfth century of the Christian era, the hindu powers...had fallen into an internecine warfare with one another...If this fatal division of the house of hinduism against

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On the other hand, the turkish invaders displayed superiority over their Indian adversaries in many respects. They possessed better military organisation, discipline and coherence. They invariably followed one leader and fully realised the value of unity of command. Their leaders were well-acquainted with the latest techniques of warfare, and they took keen interest in updating their knowledge in this respect. The turkish invaders were fine archers who depended primarily on the use of efficient and well-disciplined cavalry against the rajput infantry. They made intelligent use of the strategies; they resorted to sham fights, laid ambuscades, made sudden attacks, kept armies in reserve and employed all means, fair or foul, to win the war. They fought as desperadoes. They were conscious of the fact that they had to fight in a foreign land; therefore, if defeated, they might not be able to return alive to their country.

The turkish invaders were full of religious zeal; they stood to spread Islam by force of arms. They believed that if successful in the holy war (*jehad*), this world would lie at their feet, otherwise they would attain martyrdom in their death and go straight to paradise (*jannat*). Thus the invaders fought for a cause while the rajputs had nothing better than clan or class interests to defend.

The love for loot and plunder was, of course, a great material incentive to the turkish invaders to fight stubbornly. They justly distributed the spoils among themselves and their leaders on set principles. They received promotions and rewards from their leaders for excellent performance in the war. Naturally, every muslim soldier, who took part in the expedition, had his personal career and fortune at stake. No high office, not even that of the sultan or supreme commander of the forces, was beyond the reach of a really capable soldier. They produced, even from the ranks of their slaves, highly capable men like Qutubuddin Aibek and Bakhtiyar Khalji, but for whose contributions, Muhammad Ghori might not have been able to conquer the whole of northern India during his life-time. Attracted by the fabulous wealth of India and the love of adventure, thousands of the muslim youth from central Asia swelled the ranks of the turkish armies as *ghazis* who usually brought with them their own horses and weapons of war; on the other hand, the military resources of the rajput chiefs were confined to their own principalities, whose dimensions were sometimes not greater than those of a modern Indian district. The turkish commanders could afford to exercise qualitative control over the selection of their soldiers whereas the rajput princes had to be content with the addition to their numbers alone.

> itself that made it possible for the turkish highwaymen to force an entry ...if in the twelfth century, the rajputs had not turned their swords suicidally upon themselves, the hindu world might have continued, without any undue drain upon its energies, to keep the turks at bay and to work out its own destinies under its own control. And thus the verdict proves, on appeal, to be sucicide instead of assassination...*ibid.*, IV, p. 100.

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The Indians had to pay heavily not only for their faults but also for their virtues of character. The rajputs did not practise treachery in warfare; they were generous and merciful to their enemies. A rajput would seldom attack his foe when the latter was without adequate armament, or injured or fallen on the ground; he would rather give him a fair chance to settle the scores between the parties. A rajput knew how to fight and die a chivalrous death whereas the sole objective of a turkish soldier was to win by hook or by crook. The doctrine of *ahimsa* or non-violence had made the Indians, in general, and the buddhists among them, in particular, humane and peace-loving to a fault. They displayed non-aggressive, rather non-defensive attitude even in the face of the unscrupulous invaders and thus fell an easy prey to their aggression. The eleventh and twelfth centuries presented the last phase of the declining ancient Indian civilisation and culture, during which Toynbee's formula of *Beat—Rally—Rout*[21] played its full circle. Throughout this period, the uncreative political leadership of the rajputs was faced by a recurring challenge which it repeatedly failed to meet. At the first holocaust (Mahmud of Ghazni's invasions), the rajput polity of northern India suffered a serious setback from which it never fully recovered; and at the next crisis (viz., Muhammad Ghori's invasions), it 'went to pieces irretrievably'. The break-down of their political and military structure was followed quickly by the disintegration and decay of ancient Indian civilisation. Toynbee describes this outcome as due to the 'nemesis of creativity'. To use his phraseology, the rajput 'leadership had lost its claim to the mimesis of the society at large'; 'nevertheless, it insisted on imposing its will on the society'. It marked 'the most fateful occurrence' in the life-history of the Indian civilisation because the rajputs represented merely 'the dominant minority' who had ceased to be creative in their outlook, were 'hardened into some self-stiltifying idolatry—the 'worship of the ghost of the defunct polity'. They crumbled down to the dust before the turkish invaders owing to their 'sin of pride'.[22]

21. Toynbee, VI, p. 285.
22. *ibid.*, IV, pp. 5, 129, 131-32, 245, 257-60.

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5

Foundation of the Delhi Sultanate 1206-90

1 : Qutubuddin Aibek

The Slave Dynasty

Muhammad Ghori had no male issue to inherit his empire; *albeit* he had a passion for acquiring turkish slaves whom he treated with affection and care. He provided opportunities to them to develop their personalities for the persons of his own race who had suffered immensely at the hands of the muslim invaders of the arabic and persian stocks as well as the 'infidel' mongols. By purchasing turkish youth, Muhammad Ghori, in fact, liberated them from the clutches of others and afforded them royal patronage; in return, he received immense affection and unqualified service from them. Many of these slaves rose to prominence as military generals who earned reputation for courage, fighting skills and organisational abilities. They served their master with loyalty and helped him in expanding the boundaries of his empire; they were devoted to the tasks entrusted to them. Muhammad Ghori is said to have once remarked that these slaves were his sons who would inherit his name, fame and the fortunes of his empire.[1]

Qutubuddin Aibek was one of these trusted slave officers of Muhammad Ghori. After the latter's death, Aibek inherited his Indian possessions and set up as an independent ruler with his

1. Book no. xx of the *Tabaqat i Nasiri*, entitled "The Muizziya Sultans of Hind" (pages 137 to 165 of the text), opens with the following paragraph: This chapter is devoted to the history of those kings who were the slaves and servants of the Sultan Ghazi Muizzuddin Muhammad Sam (Muhammad Ghori), and sat upon the throne of royalty in the country of Hindustan. The throne of that king descended to them, as he had designed and as is mentioned above. They adorned their heads with the crown of royalty which had belonged to that king; and the influence of the light of Islam was preserved through their power over different parts and provinces of Hindustan.—Refer to *E & D*, II, Aligarh reprint, p. 295.

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headquarters at Lahore. He thus laid the foundation of the first independent turkish kingdom in northern India whose boundaries extended from north-west frontier to Bihar and Bengal in the east. It was untagged by Aibek from the apron-strings of the Ghaznavid empire.

Qutubuddin Aibek is called the founder of what is known in Indian history as the Slave or Mamluk[2] dynasty which ruled northern India from 1206 to 1290; it produced nine rulers. There is some justification for this nomenclature because at least three rulers of the line—Qutubuddin Aibek, Shamsuddin Iltutmish and Ghiasuddin Balban, had originally been slaves who imparted a nickname to the earliest turkish sultans of India. Otherwise, the term Slave or Mamluk dynasty is literally incorrect and historically false. A person cannot be a slave and a king at the same time. With the exception of Aibek, who received formal manumission after his accession to the throne, the other two—Iltutmish and Balban, had been, manumitted by their masters long before assuming sovereign powers. All the other rulers of the line were freemen, rather princes by their own birth-right.

It is also wrong to club all the nine rulers of this period (1206-90) under one dynasty; they actually belonged to three distinct ruling houses—the Qutbi dynasty (1206-11) founded by Qutubuddin Aibek, the first ilbari or shamsi dynasty (1211-66), known after Shamsuddin Iltutmish, and the second Ilbari dynasty (1266-90), founded by Ghiasuddin Balban.

Early Career of Aibek

Qutubuddin was a turk of the aibek tribe which, in Turkish language, means 'Lord of the Moon'.[3] It was so named because of the handsome and attractive features of its men and women, though Qutubuddin himself was rather ugly in appearance. He was taken prisoner and sold as slave while yet a boy, to a kind-hearted *qazi* of Nishapur (Persia). He received education in Islamic theology and learnt horse-riding and swordsmanship along with the sons of his master. After the death of the latter, his sons

2. lit. 'owned'—from Arabic *maluk*, to possess ; mamluk was the Quranic term for a slave.
3. *ai*—'the moon' and *bek*—'the lord'.
Minhajus Siraj gives an interesting interpretation of the term aibek. He states that the little or middle finger (*khinsar*) of Qutubuddin was broken from his hand; therefore, he was nicknamed *aibek*—'maimed in the hand'.—*Tabaqat i Nasiri*; p. 296.
Elliot refuses to accept the above-mentioned statement of Minhaj; he also challenges the meanings of *aibek* as deduced by the latter from some doubtful persian roots. He regards *aibek* to be the original name of a well-known turkish tribe of those days to which Qutubuddin belonged. *ibid.*

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sold him off to Muhammad Ghori. Aibek caught the fancy of his new master because of his martial qualities and intelligence. Very shortly, he was promoted *amir i akhur*—'the master of the royal stables'. He rose to prominence during the Indian campaigns of Muhammad Ghori. After his victory over Prithvi Raj III, the Chauhan ruler of Delhi and Ajmer, in 1192, Muhammad Ghori appointed Aibek as the viceroy of his Indian possessions. He set up his military headquarters at Indraprastha. near Delhi, and extended the dominions of his master by continuous warfare against the rajput chieftains of northern India, an account of which has already been given in the preceding chapter of this book. Aibek strengthened his position of entering into matrimonial alliances with other distinguished nobles of Muhammad Ghori. Tajuddin Yaldoz, the leader of all the slave officers of Muhammad Ghori, gave his daughter in marriage to Qutubuddin at the bidding of his imperial master. Aibek gave his sister in marriage to Nasiruddin Qubacha, another slave officer of Muhammad Ghori who held charge of Sind. Qutubuddin's daughter was married to Iltutmish, one of his own turkish slave officers. Aibek raised a huge standing army and, during the life-time of Muhammad Ghori, established his hold practically over the whole of northern India.

Accession to the Throne

Muhammad Ghori could not name his successor because of his sudden death; his empire was, therefore, parcelled out among the ghurid nobles and slave officers. More than three months after the death of Muhammad Ghori, Qutubuddin Aibek assumed reigns of government as independent ruler at Lahore on June 24, 1206. He started his reign with the modest titles of 'malik' and 'sipahasalar' which had been conferred upon him by Muhammad Ghori much earlier. He did not strike coins nor got the *khutba* read in his name. He did not assume the title of *sultan* either; it was because he had not received formal manumission from Muhammad Ghori and, as a shrewd man he did not want to arouse the jealousies of turkish nobility as well as the muslim populace by assuming royal insignia while still technically a slave in the eyes of the Islamic law. In 1208-09, Aibek went to Ghazni at the invitation of its people and held it under his occupation for a shortwhile. It was there that Ghiasuddin Mahmud, the nephew and legal successor of Muhammad Ghori, who was content with his rule over the ancestral principality of Ghur; sent deeds of manumission and investiture to Qutubuddin and conferred upon him the title of 'sultan'.

Aibek as a Ruler

Qutubuddin Aibek was a brave, energetic and capable military general. He rendered a yeoman's service to Muhammad Ghori in the conquest of northern India and founded the first independent turkish dynasty, he ruled for four years only. During this

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period, he did not make fresh conquests because his entire attention was devoted to the establishment of law and order and strengthening of his army of occupation. His main objective was to establish separate entity of the infant turkish state in India whose existence depended upon its military strength and the fixation of its specific frontiers. In order to achieve this objective, he kept himself aloof from the central Asian politics and offered tough resistance to the rulers of Ghazni and other turkish nobles, including Tajuddin Yaldoz, who preferred their claims of sovereignty over Hindustan. Qutubuddin Aibek established friendly relations with the rival turkish nobles and slave officers of Muhammad Ghori who held important military-cum-political assignments in India, and brought them under his subordination through persuasion or force. He avoided clash with the rajput chiefs who were eager to recover their lost territories and regain independence. Soon after his accession to the throne, the chandelas recovered Kalinjar and the pratihars snatched Gwalior from the hands of the turks. Similarly, the gahadavala chief Harish Chandra, reoccupied some territories in the Badaun region but Aibek could do pretty little about it. Large areas within the heart of the turkish dominions, were held by the hindu chieftains whom Aibek failed to bring under his effective control. His task was only half-done when, in 1210, he died of a sudden fall from a horse at Lahore while playing *chaugan* (polo). He was buried at Lahore.

Though not a brilliant administrator, Qutubuddin Aibek protected the life and property of his subjects and laid the rudiments of civil administration through the agency of his military officers. Local administration was left in the hands of the village panchayats and other local agencies of the pre-muslim era. He granted partial civil liberties to the hindus in return for the payment of *jaziya* and was known as the 'just monarch' among his co-religionists.

Qutubuddin Aibek was a man of letters; he possessed high moral character and refined tastes. He extended patronage to the learned; Hassan Nizami and Fakhre Mudir dedicated their books to him. Very generous and kind-hearted, Qutubuddin Aibek earned the title of *lakhdata* or *lakhbaksh* (giver of *lakhs*) because of liberal distribution of money in charity to the poor and the needy. He showed some taste for architecture by building two mosques, one at Delhi and the other at Ajmer. He laid the foundation of the first of the so-called 'seven cities' of medieval Delhi by constructing buildings in the vicinity of the old rajput fort, called *Quila i Rai Pithaura*. He started the construction of the Qutub Minar (in 1199 A.D.), the tallest stone tower in India (238 feet in height) after the name of khwaja Qutubudin Bakhtiyar Kaki, a famous sufi saint of his times; it was completed by Iltutmish.

Qutubuddin Aibek was succeeded by his inexperienced and incapable son Aram Shah who ruled at Lahore for about eight months before being defeated and deposed by Iltutmish.

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2 : The Shamsi or the First Ilbari Dynasty

Shamsuddin Iltutmish (1211-36)

Early Career and Accession : Shamsuddin Iltutmish[4] was a slave of Qutubuddin Aibek. His father[5] was an influential noble of the ilbari tribe of the turks. Being handsome and intelligent, Iltutmish excited the jealousy of his half-brothers who deceitfully handed him over to a slave-trader. After passing through many hands, he was, ultimately, purchased by Qutubuddin Aibek in Delhi at an exorbitant price of one lakh jitals.[6] Iltutmish seems to have acquired good education and wide knowledge of the Islamic world during the early days of his adversity. That is why he quickly rose to be the *amir-i-shikar* and son-in-law of his master within a decade. He was governor of the iqtas of Gwalior and Baran (Bulandshahr) in succession. In 1206, he held the charge of Badaun as one of the most trusted lieutenants of Aibek. He was manumitted by Aibek long before the latter received such formal manumission himself. It was done in 1205-06 at the instance of Muhammad Ghori[7] who was deeply impressed by the

4. A turki word which meant 'saviour of the kingdom'; it was synonymous with *alamgir* or *jahangir*; its persian version was Altamish or Altamsh.

5. Elam (Ilam or Yelam) Khan.

6. Equivalent to about two thousand silver *tankas*.

   K.A. Nizami opines that 'some enterprising slave-merchants carefully picked up a few of the most promising young turkish slaves and trained them not for menial work...but for the service of the kings and governors. These selected slaves were generally brought up with the sons of their master; but spending money on their education was an investment that paid itself many times over, and a slave-merchant would have considered this expenditure an unnecessary waste in the case of his sons. They had to be taught all subjects necessary for government...what the kings and high officers wanted were turkish slaves to whom proper military and academic instruction had been given and who could be appointed to a responsible office after a few years of probation.' *Comp. HI*; V, pp. 196-97.

7. In the connection, Minhajus Siraj narrates the following story:

   When Sultan Muizzuddin Muhammad Sam returned from Khwarizm, after being defeated in the battle of Andkhod by the armies of Khita, the Khokhar (Gakkar) tribes broke out in rebellion, and the Sultan marched against them from Ghazni. Qutubuddin, according to his orders, brought up an army from Hindustan, and Shamsuddin (Iltutmish) accompanied him with the forces of Badaun. In the height of the battle, Shamsuddin rode into the stream of Jailam, where that rabble had taken refuge, and exhibited great bravery, galling the enemy so with his arrows that he overcame their resistance, and sent them from the tops of the waves into the depths of hell; they drowned and entered fires.

   The Sultan (Muhammad Ghori), in the midst of the battle, observed his feats of daring and courage, and enquired who he was. When His Majesty was enlightened upon this point, he called him into his presence and honoured him with a special notice. Qutubuddin was ordered to attend

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performance of Iltutmish in the campaign against the khokhars. It is all the more interesting because Muhammad Ghori himself had never bothered to issue formal letters of manumission for his own slave generals, including Tajuddin Yaldoz, Nasiruddin Qubacha and Qutubuddin Aibek.

The turkish nobility of Delhi did not approve of the hereditary succession of Aram Shah, an incompetent and unpopular ruler. They invited Iltutmish from Badaun to assume their leadership as sultan. Aram Shah refused to abdicate but was defeated and deposed by Iltutmish in 1211.

Real Founder of the Delhi Sultanate : Iltutmish was the real founder of the Delhi Sultanate. He made Delhi his seat of governance in preference to Lahore and proved to be a very strong and capable ruler who enjoyed a long reign of twenty-six years. He strengthened the foundations of the infant turkish state in northern India by saving it from internal forces of disintegration and external dangers. With effect from 1211, the centre of political gravity shifted from Kanauj to Delhi which came to occupy premier position as the capital of Hindustan. Delhi continued to enjoy this privileged status throughout the medieval period for over five hundred years.[8]

Rival Turkish Nobles: The weak, and also brief rule of Aram Shah had encouraged the disruptive and rebellious tendencies among the turkish nobles ; it threatened the disintegration of the newly-founded turkish state in India. In spite of his victory over Aram Shah and the popular support of the turkish nobility of Delhi, Iltutmish's accession to the throne did not go unchallenged. Nasiruddin Qubacha, the governor of Uchh (Sind) and Multan occupied Lahore as well and declared his independence. Ali Mardan Khalji, who had succeeded to the governorship of Bihar and Bengal on the death of Muhammad Bin Bhakhtiyar Khalji in 1206, also stopped sending the tribute to Delhi. Tajuddin Yaldoz (the father-in-law of Qutubuddin Aibek), now the sultan of Ghazni, tried to assert his political dominance over Iltutmish by sending him the royal canopy (*chhatr*) and

Altamsh well, as he was destined for great works. His Majesty then ordered the deed of his freedom to be written out and graciously granted him his liberty.—*Tabaqat i Nasiri*; p. 319.

8. Delhi was eclipsed by the emergence of Calcutta as the headquarters of the East India Company's government with effect from 1765 A.D., when the latter received its *de jure* recognition from the fugitive mughal emperor Shah Alam II. Nevertheless, Delhi continued to be the capital of the later mughals right upto the outbreak of the Great Revolt of 1857-58. The transfer of the capital from Calcutta to Delhi by the British Indian government in 1911 led to the revival of the imperial glory of that historic town.
The seat of governance of the sultans was called *dar-ul-khilafa*, which literally means 'house of the khalifa.'

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robes of honour at the time of his accession.[9] As a shrewd displomat, Iltutmish pocketed the insult for a shortwhile *albeit* he never permitted Yaldoz to encroach upon his Indian possessions.

Liquidation of Tajuddin Yaldoz (*1215-16*): As luck would have it, Yaldoz himself was defeated and driven out of Ghazni by Alauddin Muhammad, the Khwarizm Shah, soon afterwards. He retreated towards the Punjab and laid claim to the throne of Delhi on the basis of being the seniormost ghurid officer. Iltutmish gave him a crushing defeat at Tarain; Yaldoz was taken prisoner and put to death after a brief confinement at Badaun. It was a great achievement for Iltutmish; it eliminated one of his most serious rivals from the scene of action and also saved the turkish sultanate of Delhi from the foreign domination of Ghazni.

Defeat of Nasiruddin Qubacha (*1217* A.D.) : After the defeat of Yaldoz at the hands of Iltutmish, Nasiruddin Qabacha occupied Lahore once again. On being challenged by Iltutmish at the head of a large army, he, however, retreated towards Multan. Iltutmish gave him a hot chase and defeated him at Mansura, on the banks of the river Chenab. Iltutmish refrained, however, from marching upon Sind because of his anxiety to safeguard the north-west frontier in the face of the rapidly deteriorating political situation in central Asia. Qubacha, therefore, continued to rule over Sind almost as an independent ruler till his death in 1227.

Mongols on the North-western Frontier (*1220-24*) : Iltutmish received, in 1220-21, the alarming news of the mongol menace in central Asia. They were the nomadic hordes who descended from 'the uplands of Tartary' and spread fire and sword in the Islamic world under the leadership of Chengez Khan. The mongols had not yet entered the fold of Islam; they were *shamanists* by faith, which was a varied form of buddhism.

Alauddin Muhammad, the Khwarizm shah, one of the greatest muslim monarchs of his age, had to eat a humble pie at their hands; he fled towards the Caspean while his eldest son, Jalauddin Mankbarni escaped towards Afghanistan. The latter was followed close upon his heels by Chengez Khan. Mankbarni entered the Indus valley and demanded help from Iltutmish against the mongols. The latter put his envoy to death and refused to oblige the Khwarizm prince by sending a diplomatic reply that the climate of India would not suit him; at the same time, he resisted Mankbarni's advance towards Delhi by show of force. Mankbarni forged an alliance with the khokhars of the salt range by marrying the daughter of their chief[10] and invaded

9. Minhaj, *Tabaqat i Nasiri*; pp. 319-20.
10. Rai Khokhar Sankin.

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Sind where he came into clash with Qubacha to the great relief of Iltutmish.

Iltutmish did not allow Delhi to be drawn into the central Asian politics. By a diplomatic stroke, he saved himself from the wrath of Chengez Khan and the country from the fury of the mongol hordes. The scorching heat of the Indian summer was not to the taste of the mongols who retraced their step towards central Asia. Some of them, however, made settlements beyond the Indus and proved a source of nuisance to the sultanate later on. Having failed to establish a foothold on the Indian soil, Mankbarni also left for Khurasan, his homeland, in 1224. Iltutmish was so much scared of the mongol terror that, until after the death of Chengez Khan in 1227, he did not launch any military expedition for the occupation of the western Punjab or Sind.

Had Changez Khan decided to march upon India in 1220-21, the infant turkish sultanate of Delhi would have collapsed and disappeared for ever.

Reconquest of Multan and Sind (1227-28) : Iltutmish heaved a sigh of relief when he heard of the death of Chengez Khan in 1227. It was then that he launched an offensive against Nasiruddin Qubacha from two sides—Lahore and Delhi. Multan and Uchh were captured and Qubacha was besieged in the fort of Bhakkar on the bank of the Indus. Surrounded from all sides by the enemy and totally exhausted, Qubacha made his last bid to escape by plunging into the river, and was drowned. The sumra ruler of Debal principality hastened to acknowledge the suzerainty of Iltutmish soon after. Iltutmish placed the provinces of Multan and Sind under the charge of two separate governors.

Reconquest of Bihar and Bengal: At the time of Iltutmish's succession to the throne, Ali Mardan had set up as an independent ruler of Bengal with his capital al Lakhnauti. He was put to death, because of his oppressive rule, by his own rebellious officers who raised Hasanuddin Iwaz Khalji to the throne. The latter assumed the title of sultan Ghiyasuddin and proved to be a very successful ruler. He conquered Bihar, suppressed the refractory hindu chieftains and earned a name for himself for his public welfare activities. In 1225-26, southern Bihar was recovered by Iltutmish who appointed Malik Alauddin Jani to be its governor; Ghiyasuddin also accepted nominal suzerainty of Delhi. Soon after Iltutmish's return, however, Ghiyasuddin repudiated the agreement and reoccupied Bihar. Thereupon, Nasiruddin Mahmud, the eldest son of Iltutmish, then governor of Oudh, launched a surprise attack upon Lakhnauti in 1226, and conquered it; Ghiyasuddin was defeated and put to the sword. Iltutmish appointed his son to be the viceroy of Bihar and Bengal but the sudden death of the latter led to yet another uprising at Lakhnauti which was suppressed by Iltutmish himself

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in 1230-31. In order to bring the region under his effective control, Iltutmish appointed two separate governors, one for Bengal and the other for Bihar.

Conflict with the Rajputs : The hindus of the Gangetic valley and central India were not reconciled to the loss of their independence. Some of their leaders took up arms against the turkish forces of occupation immediately after the death of Muhammad Ghori. Qutubuddin Aibek avoided direct confrontation with them and suffered the loss of towns like Kanauj, Benaras, Kalinjar and Gwalior. Aram Shah's weak rule further encouraged them to reconquer their lost territories. The turkish armies were turned out of Rajputana. During the fifteen years of his reign, Iltutmish also failed to take any action against them because of his conflict with the rival turkish nobles and preoccupation with the north-west frontier problems. He launched a full-fledged campaign against the rajputs in 1226. Ranthambhor was recovered from the chauhans first; Mandsor, the headquarters of the parmars, was acquired next. The chauhan ruler of Jalor was compelled to acknowledge turkish suzerainty. Thereafter, the territories of Bayana, Ajmer and Sambhar were reconquered after many a bloody engagement with the rajputs. A big slice of Jodhpur state, including the town of Nagaur, was annexed by 1230. The parihar ruler of Gwalior was subjugated in 1230-31 after a year-long siege of the fort. Iltutmish led an attack on Nagada, the capital of Guhilots but suffered a defeat at the hands of *rana* Kshetra Singh. Iltutmish's army was also repulsed with heavy losses by the chalukyas of Gujarat. Nevertheless, he carried out an expedition into Malwa in 1234-35 and plundered the towns of Bhilsa and Ujjain.

The campaign in the Gangetic valley was launched under the charge of Nasiruddin Mahmud, the eldest son of Iltutmish. The territories of Badaun, Kanauj and Benaras were conquered from the hindu chieftains. Katehar (Rohilkhand), with its capital Ahichhatra, was also conquered after a long struggle ; more than a lakh of the turkish soldiers are said to have lost their lives in this campaign.

In 1235, Iltutmish made an attempt to bring the khokhars under his subjugation ; the town of Baniyan, which constituted the nucleus of their power in the salt range, was taken *albeit* the khokhars showed no signs of appeasement. Exhausted by continuous warfare, Iltutmish fell sick, returned to Delhi and breathed his last in April 1236. He was buried in the magnificent tomb which he had got constructed for himself in Delhi.

An Estimate

Iltutmish was not a great administrator ; he created no civil institutions. His was a military dictatorship like that of Aibek

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but with the difference that all the reins of government were concentrated in his own hands. Iltutmish laid the foundation of an absolute monarchy of the turks in northern India. He made all the key-appointments of central ministers and regional military governors himself ; the *wazir* (prime minister), *sadr i jahan* (head of the ecclesiastical affairs) and the chief *qazi* held office during his pleasure, and were responsible to him directly. He did not permit the turkish nobility to interfere in the state affairs beyond certain limits. The disaffected and insubordinate ghurid (Muizzi) or qutbi officers were gradually downgraded or eliminated. Iltutmish created an entirely new class of the ruling elite which comprised his own turkish slave officers, headed by their forty powerful military leaders—nicknamed the *chalisa* (chihalgani or chehalgan), 'the Forty'. They held charge of the *iqtas* or regions into which the kingdom was divided, and wielded great influence at the court. Iltutmish secured a letter of investiture from the Abbasid Caliph Al-Mustansir Billah of Baghdad in February 1229, who bestowed the titles[11] of the 'Sultan of Hindustan' and the 'deputy of the leader of the faithful' (*nasir amir ul momnin*). It accorded a legal recognition and spiritual sanction to the Sultanate of Delhi as a distinct entity, independent of Ghazni. It also strengthened his position and ensured the succession of his offsprings to the throne. All those who had hitherto dubbed him as the usurper to the throne and cast aspersions on his rule were silenced. Iltutmish was thus the first legal sovereign of the Indian turks and real founder of the sultanate of Delhi. The investiture ceremony was celebrated in Delhi with great rejoicings.

11. Great significance has been attached to this incident by the contemporary historians. Minhajus Siraj narrates it as follows:

> When His Majesty (Iltutmish) returned from that fort (Uchh), the compiler (Minhaj) also came to Delhi...with the victorious army of that invincible king, and reached the city in the month of Ramazan AH 625 (August 1228). At this time, messengers bringing splendid robes from the seat of the Khilafat reached the frontiers of Nagore, and on Monday, the 2nd of the Rabiulawwal AH 626, they arrived at the capital, and the city was adorned by their presence. The king and his chief nobles and his sons and other nobility and servants were all honoured with robes sent from the metropolis of Islam—*Tabaqat i Nasiri*; p. 322.

Hasan Nizami adds to the information in the following words:

> ...a dress of honour was received from the Imam Mustansir Billah by the Sultan (Iltutmish), accompanied by a diploma, confirming him in the kingdom of Hindustan, with the title of the great Sultan. He received the diploma with deep respect and appointed the following day, namely the 23rd Rabiulawwal, 626 H (February 1229 AD), for a general assembly, in which the *farman* was read out in the presence of the king, the princes and nobles. It declared that he was confirmed in the possession of 'the land and sea which he conquered'. Robes were bestowed upon the ambassadors, the chiefs, the nobles, in honour of the event, and great joy prevailed upon the occasion throughout the capital.—*Tajul Ma'asir*; *E&D*; II, Aligarh reprint, p. 243.

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Iltutmish strengthened the forces of law and order in the state, allowed the local administrative bodies to function as before and administered even-handed justice according to the Islamic standards of those days. He introduced a purely arabic currency of gold and silver ; his standard silver *tanka* weighed 175 grains.

Though orthodox *sunni* and devoted to the faith, Iltutmish was not a fanatic. He persecuted the *Ismaili shias* of Delhi and his treatment towards the hindus was harsh but not cruel. He had desecrated the magnificent hindu temples at Bhilsa and Ujjain but he did not resort to idol-breaking just to satisfy the whims of his fanatic co-religionists. He adopted a policy of moderation towards the hindus as a measure of political expediency and tried to win their cooperation in running the administration. He encouraged the muslims to make settlements in the hindu habitats, particularly, in the mountainous and forest regions so as to exert pressure over the hindus and discourage them from harbouring rebellious feelings towards the sultanate.

Iltutmish was a patron of art and learning. Because of the mongol upheavals in central Asia, hundreds of muslims theologians, scholars and artists fled their hearths and homes and sought shelter in Delhi ; Amir Khusrau's father was one of them. Iltutmish extended liberal patronage to them and enriched the cultural life of the ruling elite. He completed the construction of Qutub Minar and enjoyed his association with the *sufi* saints of the day.

Iltutmish was a man of courage and foresight. He unified the turkish leadership under one central authority and saved the infant sultanate from disintegration. He protected it from the fury of the mongols and gave a legal and independent status to it in the comity of the Islamic states. He was an empire-builder who strove to accomplish the unfinished task of Qutubuddin Aibek in laying the foundations of the sultanate of Delhi.

3 : Successors of Iltutmish

The Turkish Power-politic aud the Problems of Succession

There was no fixed law of succession in the Islamic polity. Occupation of the throne depended on the general law of nature—'the survival of the fittest'. It was, perhaps, the single major factor which had led to the rapid expansion of the muslim arms in various parts of the world ; it afforded ample opportunities to the ambitious and capable military generals to carve out vast empires for themselves. It facilitated the rapid spread of turkish arms in northern India under the leadership of Muhammad Ghori and his brilliant slave officers. Qutubuddin Aibek laid

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the claim to his master's heritage on this very account. The concept of an all-powerful hereditary 'sultan', among the turkish nobility of India, was still in its initial stage of evolution. The political power was concentrated in the hands of turkish officers of Muhammad Ghori, generally called the Muizze or Ghurid or Ghori nobles. Within themselves, they could roughly be classified into three categories. The ghurids proper were the kinsmen of Muhammad Ghori and members and relations of his ancestral clan. The Tazik turks were the freemen, the turkish immigrants who had come to India of their choice and sought patronage of Muhammad Ghori and his lieutenants; they constituted a microscopic section of the turkish nobility. The third category comprised the turkish slave officers of Muhammad Ghori; they were most numerous and influential among the nobility. Muhammad Ghori himself had put great faith in his slave officers and shown preference to them over the others; Qutubuddin Aibek who inherited his Indian possessions, belonged to this category.

In the struggle for political dominance, the turkish slave officer of Qutubuddin Aibek, called the Qutbi nobles, came to acquire a premier position among the nobility during the reign of their master; Shamsuddin Iltutmish was their chief representative. Iltutmish, in turn, created a new class of the turkish nobility which comprised his own slaves, promoted as officers. They were referred to as the Shamsi nobles, after the name of their master. After some time, during the hey day of Iltutmish's reign, forty of these slave officers constituted the top leadership among the shamsi nobles who held all the important pertfolios as state ministers and regional military governors; they earned the nickname of the *Chalisa*—'the Forty'. They helped Iltutmish in the consolidation of the sultanate of Delhi.

The Rule of 'the Forty'[12]

It was primarily because of the loyalty and unstincted support of his slave officers that Iltutmish felt himself secure on the throne and thought of ensuring the succession of his children, thus making the monarchy an hereditary institution. This was perhaps too much to expect from his ex-slaves who constituted the real power behind the throne. Their loyalty to the person of Iltutmish was unquestioned, *albeit* they considered themselves to be the partners in the state enterprise which was the outcome of

12. Their actual number in the subsequent course of the struggle was not exactly forty; some of them were gradually eliminated, liquidated or supplanted by the more ambitious Shamsi nobles; therefore, the term 'the forty' carried political connotations only; it invariably referred to the dominant group among the Shamsi slave officers irrespective of their numerical strength.

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their collective contribution. They, therefore, could not reconcile themselves to the principle of hereditary monarchy in preference to that of selection on merit and capability—the very principle on which Iltutmish had once acquired the throne for himself. That is why, after the death of Iltutmish, there ensued a grim political struggle between 'the Forty' and the hereditary successors of the deceased sultan.[13] The court intrigues, conspiracies and revolts led to depositions and murders in cold blood in quick succession in which 'the Forty' played the role of kingmakers'. Ultimately, one of their leaders, Ghiasuddin Balban himself became the sultan in 1266. The period from 1236 to 1266 is, therefore, called the era of 'the rule of the Forty' in the history of the Sultanate of Delhi.

Ruknuddin Firoze (April-November 1236)

Nasiruddin Mahmud, the eldest son of Iltutmish, who was by far the most capable of all his children, died a premature death in 1229. Iltutmish did not have a high opinion of his second son Ruknuddin Firoze because of his ease-loving habits and excessive indulgence in sensual pleasures. He, therefore, wished his daughter Razia to succeed him to the throne. After his death, much against his will, the turkish nobles raised Ruknuddin to the throne. An incapable ruler, he failed to win the confidence of the shamsi nobles some of whom were powerful governors of various provinces (*iqtas*). Taking avantage of her son's incompetence, the unscrupulous Queen Dowager, Shah Turkan,[14] began to meddle with the state affairs. She also annoyed other members of the royal household by her oppressive treatment.[15] Ruknuddin was, therefore, deposed

13. Minhajus Siraj writes about the rise of 'the Forty' as follows:
After the death of Shamsuddin (Iltutmish), his Forty turk slaves grew powerful. The sons of the late sultan did not bear themselves like princes, and were unfitted (*sic*) for the duties of royalty...Under the influence of these turk slaves all the great men, and the sons of those great men who had been *maliks* and *wazirs*, were upon some pretence or other, set aside and after their removal, the Shamsi slaves became the leading men of the State...These Shamsi slaves had been fellow slaves, and when they became all at once great and powerful, no one would give precedence or acknowledge inferiority to another. In possessions and display, in grandeur and dignity, they vied with each other, and in their proud vaunts and boasts, every one exclaimed to the other—
"What art thou that I am not, and what wilt thou be that I shall not be?" The incompetence of the sons of Shamsuddin, and the arrogance of the Shamsi slaves, thus brought into contempt that throne which had been among the most dignified and exalted in the world.
Tabaqat i Naisiri, pp. 98-99.

14. Originally, a maidservant of Iltutmish, who was subsequently made a queen.

15. Some ladies of Iltutmish's *harem* were secretly murdered while the others deprived of their privy purses. A youthful son of Iltutmish, named Qutubuddin, was blinded and then put to death on flimsy charges. She once hatched a conspiracy to kill Razia as well.

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after about seven months' rule; he died in confinement.[16]

Razia Begum (1236-40)

Razia Begum succeeded her half-brother Ruknuddin as the sultan[17] of Delhi. She was a highly educated lady of courage and foresight. She was brought up by Iltutmish like a son ; she received training in horse-riding, shooting and swordsmanship. Free from all social prejudices of her day, Razia used to attend the court of her father like other princes and acquired sufficient experience in statecraft in her youth. She possessed all the qualities befitting a ruler ; and her father, unmindful of the Islamic traditions and ridicule of the orthodox *ulama*, nominated her to succeed him to the throne.[18] The turkish nobility, however, thought it below their dignity to be governed by a woman. After the death of Iltutmish, Razia's claim to the throne was brushed aside *albeit* the unpopularity and incompetence of Ruknuddin afforded her an opportunity to emerge from behind the veil.

Accession and Early Problems : Razia's accession to the throne was almost dramatic. The prestige of the sultanate had sunk very low because of internal disorder and insubordinate conduct of the provincial governors. The Indus valley, including Sind, was overrun by Saifuddin Hasan Qarlugh of Ghazni. The capital was under attack from the four governors of Lahore, Multan, Hansi and Badaun : they were the ringleaders of the Shamsi nobles. Nizamul

16. Died on November 19, 1236; was probably put to death by Razia's orders.
17. It is wrong to call her *sultana* which, in Arabic, means the wife of the sultan; Razia was the sovereign ruler or sultan by her own right. Her mother's name was *sultana* Turkman Khatun.
18. Minhajus Siraj writes that:
In the time of her father...she had exercised authority with great dignity. Her mother was the chief wife of His Majesty, and she resided in the chief royal palace in the *Kushk-Firozi*. The Sultan discerned in her countenance the signs of power and bravery, and, although she was a girl and lived in retirement, yet when the Sultan returned from the conquest of Gwalior, he directed his secretary, Tajul Malik Mahmud, who was director of the government, to put her name in writing as heir of the kingdom, and successor to the throne. Before this *farman* was executed, the servants of the state, who were in close intimacy with His Majesty, represented that, seeing the king had grown up sons who were worthy of the dignity, what wisdom could there be in making a woman the heir to a Muhammadan throne, and what advantage could accrue from it? They besought him to set their minds at ease, for the course that he had proposed seemed very inexpedient. The king replied, "My sons are devoted to the pleasures of youth, and no one of them is qualified to be king. They are unfit to rule the country, and after my death, you will find that there is no one more competent to guide the state than my daughter. It was afterwards agreed by common consent that the king had judged wisely.—*Tabaqat i Nasiri*, p. 329.

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Mulk Junaidi, the *wazir* also joined hands with them. Ruknuddin, in the face of desertions among his troops, moved out of the capital half-heartedly to give a battle to the rebels. There was widespread discontent among the populace of Delhi against him for the misconduct of state affairs. The people publicly condemned him and expressed doubts about his competence to suppress the rebellious nobles. Under these circumstances, Razia picked up courage to face the audience and stop the tide from turning against the entire family of her illustrious father. She had a brainwave; on the occasion of Friday prayers, she appeared in the Jama Masjid in red garments[19] and aroused the 'pious' congregation in her favour through a forceful speech. She pleaded for protection against the cruel treatment of Shah Turkan, suggested the audience to exercise their sovereign right to remove a worthless ruler like Ruknuddin and reminded them that by her father's will, the crown should have actually gone to her. She held out a promise to abdicate the throne and face any penalty imposed by the public, including death, if she failed to fulfil their expectations as a ruler. Fully excited, the mob attacked the royal palace and put Shah Turkan to death, and a handful of the military officers, in charge of the town, proclaimed Razia to be the sultan. Ruknuddin rushed to Delhi to save the situation but was thrown behind the bars and put to death; after that *khutba* was read and coins struck in Razia's name as Sultan Raziat al-Dunia wa'l Din bint al-Sultan.

Razia's reign lasted about three years and a half. She proved to be the first and the last female sultan of Delhi. In fact, the accession of a woman to the throne was against Islamic tradition. The *ulama* of Delhi were hypnotised under the momentary spell of public excitement caused by the dramatic and unusual situation created by Razia. As a class, the muslim theologians did not give their assent to her assumption of royal authority. So was the case with most of 'the Forty'—the powerful Shamsi nobles, the *grandees* of the sultanate, who held high offices and provincial governorship. The military *junta* of Delhi had not obtained their approval before declaring Razia to be the sultan. They were, however, too perplexed to take immediate action against her; they perferred 'to wait and see'. Razia thus got the opportunity to play the role of a sultan as best as she could.

Once on the throne, Razia gave good account of herself as a shrewd diplomat and strategist. The four provincial governors had encamped their forces in the vicinity of Delhi; they were yet undecided regarding their future course of action. Razia had a few thousands of the soldiers and meagre resources at her command, *albeit* she moved out of the fort of Delhi with a show of force and wide publicity to boost the morale of the soldiers and the populace alike. Working on the diplomatic principle of 'divide and rule,' she

19. Symbolising an 'aggrieved party' demanding justice according to the Islamic customs of those days.

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won over two of the rebel governors[20] to her side and then carried out extensive propaganda that the other rebels[21] would soon be brought in chains to the capital without a fight. It unnerved the rebels who fled for their lives, each in distrust of the other. They were pursued by Razia's supporters and liquidated; Junaidi, the ex-*wazir* died a fugitive in the Sirmur hills. The prestige of Razia soared high; all the other provincial governors hastened to offer their submission to her and she became the sultan in name as well as in fact.

Razia's State Policy : Razia strengthened her position as an independent ruler; she rufused to fall under the dominating influence of the Shamsi nobles. She richly rewarded those who had stood by her, and gave rapid promotions to her favourites. Khwaja Muhazzabuddin, previously the *naib wazir* under Ruknuddin, was promoted to be the *wazir*. In order to break the monopoly of power of the turkish nobles, she began to offer high offices to capable non-turks as well. She reshuffled many provincial governors and sent new officers to take charge of the important *iqtas*.

Razia obtained public acclaim for a shortwhile by discharging her functions with great enthusiasm. She discarded the *purdah*, adorned the male attire and held the open court. She supervised the various departments of administration and issued orders to the governors to restore law and order in their *iqtas*. She listened to public grievances and administered even-handed justice. The fort of Ranthambhor had been recovered by the chauhans after the death of Iltutmish. Razia sent the newly-appointed *naibi lashkar* malik Qutubuddin Hasan Ghori for its reconquest. The fort was recaptured and razed to the ground lest the rajputs might recover and garrison it once again.

Razia proved herself to be very intelligent, noble and just ruler. Kind-hearted, liberal in religious outlook, and unconventional in social habits, she was far ahead of her times in her mental make-up. It was, however, her misfortune that she was a woman and the orthodox muslim society, particularly, the fanatic *mullas* of those days did not like that she should deviate form the traditional social norms. The proud turkish nobles thought it beneath their dignity to be governed by a woman, especially the one who did not allow them to have a say in the state affairs. No wonder, there started a whispering campaign against her just to malign her in the eyes of the public. Rumours were set afloat costing aspersions on her character; one such rumour was about her romance with the erstwhile Abyssinian slave, Jalaluddin Yakut[22] whom she had promoted *amir i*

20. viz; Malik Izzuddin Muhammad Salar and Malik Izzuddin Kabir Khan Ayaz.
21. Their ring-leaders were Malik Allauddin Jani, Malik Saifuddin Kuchi and Nizamul Mulk Junaidi.
22. Yakut had held high offices under Iltutmish and Ruknuddin also.

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akhur (master of the royal stables). Minhajus Siraj states that considerable 'familiarity' existed between them 'so much so that when she rode, he always lifted her on the horse by raising her up under the arms'. Ibn Battuta writes that she was accused of having illicit 'connections' with Yakut.[23] Anyway, such rumours were enough to cloud the real issue. Having failed to beat Razia on the administrative and military fronts, the Shamsi nobles and orthodox *mullas* resorted to a character assassination campaign against her. Razia's only weakness seemed to be her sex and even the best of 'her talents and virtues were insufficient to protect her' from that 'single weakness'.

Razia also apprehended trouble and made security arrangements in the royal household and the court. She had a strong and loyal army at her command and was immensely popular with the people of the capital. Accordingly, none could harm her while in Delhi. A conspiracy was, therefore, hatched to entice her away from the capital and get rid of her, a number of courtiers and provincial governors were a party to it; Ikhtiyaruddin Aeitigin, the lord chamberlain (*amir i hajib*) was the ring-leader. Ziauddin Junaidi, the governor of Gwalior was suspected of rebellious conduct; he was called to the court in 1238 and liquidated. It spread consternation among the Shamsi nobles who charged that Razia had started organising 'political murders on mere suspicion'. It sparked off simultaneous revolts in various parts of the empire. Kabir Khan Ayaz, the governor of Lahore and Multan raised a standard of revolt merely on the issue of the alleged intimacy between Razia and Yakut which was 'derogatory to the pride of the turks'. Razia marched upon Lahore with a lightning speed and gave a crushing defeat to the rebel. The latter, however, apologised and was given back the governorship of Multan *albeit* the province of Lahore was taken out of his control. Within a fortnight of this incident, Razia received the news that Altunia, the governor of Bathinda had also revolted. Razia moved straight towards Bathinda but was defeated and taken prisoner by Altunia. Yakut fell into the hands of the conspirators within the royal camp while the battle was going on; and was put to death. The conspirators at Delhi led by the traitor Aeitigin raised Razia's brother Behram, the third son of Iltutmish, to the throne and appointed themselves to all the high offices of the state. The people of Delhi, in spite of their love for Razia, could do nothing against the selfish turkish nobles because there was none to lead the public movement; the people's voice was drowned under the clatter of arms.

While helping themselves to the spoils of victory, the Shamsi nobles of Delhi just forgot to assign a place of authority and prestige to Altunia who still held the key to their success at Bathinda. Being

23. Mahdi Husain, *The Rehla of Ibn Battuta* (India, Maldive Islands and Ceylon)—trs. and commentary; Oriental Institute, Baroda, 1952, p. 34,

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away from Delhi, none seemed to have remembered him; Altunia was naturally antagonised towards them. It provided an opportunity to Razia to befriend him; she married Altunia and both of them made the last bid to recover Delhi from the hands of the rebels. They were deserted by most of their followers. They gave a heroic fight to the enemy near Kaithal but were defeated and taken prisoners on October 13, 1240; both of them were beheaded the next day.

An Estimate : Razia was the ablest of all the five successors of Iltutmish; as a person of character and capabilities, she was 'better than a man'. Her elevation to the throne 'vindicated the choice of Iltutmish;[24] her recognition as the sultan was based on the popular support of the people of Delhi; such an unqualified support was never enjoyed by any other sultan of Delhi. Given the opportunity, she would have proved to be a very capable ruler like her illustrious father; unfortunately, her career was cut short by non-cooperation of the self-seeking Shamsi nobles and the hostility of the orthodox *mullas* who failed to see the virtues in her as the sovereign. She refused to play the second fiddle to them; this was the main reason why they turned against her. Her sex was, of course, the next important factor which brought about her fall.[25] The consolidation and stability of the infant turkish state needed the emergence of a strong and absolute monarchy which could hold the distant provincial governors under its firm control and take a bold stand against the rival rajput chiefs who were ever eager to recover their lost territories. Razia made an attempt to establish such an absolute monarchy and was amply qualified to play the role of the saviour of the turkish state in India but she was not permitted to do so. Being a woman, she could not give a square deal to the conspirators and rumour mongers. She sacrificed her life for having displayed the finest virtues of head and heart and remarkably forward-looking socio-political views. Had she had a reasonable time to rule the state she might have generated new socio-political forces for the better and healthier growth and development of the turkish polity, in particular, and Indo-Muslim society, in general.

Behram Shah (1240-42)

Muizuddin Behram Shah who sat on the throne of Delhi for about two years was a mere puppet in the hands of the Shamsi nobles; the latter constituted the ruling *junta* and shared all powers of the state. Muhazzabuddin continued to be the *wazir* while

24. *Comp. HI*, V, p. 237.

25. "Sultan Razia was a great monarch. She was wise, just, and generous, a benefactor to her kingdom, a dispenser of justice, the protector of her subjects, and the leader of her armies. She was endowed with all the qualities befitting a king, but she was not born of the right sex, and so in the estimation of men, all these virtues were worthless."—Minhajus Siraj, *Tabaqat i Nasiri*; pp. 328-29.

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Ikhtiyaruddin Aeitigin carried on administration on behalf of the sultan in his capacity as *naib i mamlikat*[26]—the viceroy; he enhanced his power and prestige by marrying a sister of the sultan. In a bid to liberate himself from their influence, Behram got Aeitigin murdered but Badruddin Sunqar, the *amir i hajib*, took no time in usurping all the powers of the sultan. He was also liquidated by Behram Shah through a piece of clever diplomacy; the Shamsi nobles, however, became conscious of his evil designs and put him to death in May 1242.

The Mongol Invasion : During the reign of Behram Shah, the mongols invaded India under their leader Tair in 1241. They were repulsed from Multan by its governor Kabir Khan but Malik Qarqash, the turkish governor of Lahore, fled the capital which was captured by the mongols and sacked. They retired from India after the plunder of Lahore.

Alauddin Masudshah (1242-46)

Izzuddin Kishlu Khan, one of the Shamsi nobles, declared himself the sultan on the deposition of Behram Shah but his colleagues did not approve of his action. They, instead, placed Alauddin Masudshah, a grandson of Iltutmish (son of Ruknuddin Firoze) on the throne. He held the crown as a nominal sultan for about four years; all the powers of the state were wielded by the nobility headed by the *malik naib* Qutubuddin Hasan Ghori. Muhazzabuddin continued to be the *wazir* as before but fell out with the other nobles and was dismissed after some time. Balban, one of 'the Forty', rose into prominence into the state politics during this period as *amir i hajib*; he married one of his daughters to the young sultan.

Masudshah's reign marked the slow disintegration of the sultanate. Tamar Khan, the governor of Bengal, declared his independence and annexed Bihar as well. Multan and Uchh became independent under Kabir Khan Ayaz who successfully resisted the attacks of Saiffuddin Qarlugh[27] and the mongols. The khokhars became aggressive in the salt range while the hindu chieftains took up arms against the sultanate in the Gangetic valley. In June 1246, Masudshah was deposed and supplanted by Nasiruddin Mahmud through the connivance of 'the Forty'.

Nasiruddin Mahmud (1246-66)

A Grandson of Iltutmish: Until recently, it was commonly held that Nasiruddin Mahmud, who succeeded to the throne of

26. Also called *naib i mulk* or *malik naib*.
27. A free-booter from Ghazni who hanged on in the nortwestern India for quite sometime.

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Delhi after Masudshah, was the youngest son of Iltutmish. Recent researches[28] have, however, revealed the fact that he was the posthumous child of *shahzada* Nasiruddin, the eldest son of Iltutmish, who was governor of Bengal and Bihar at the time of his premature death at Lakhnauti in April 1229. The untimely death of the crown prince made Iltutmish grow grey almost overnight; he never fully recovered from this shock. No wonder he developed intense filial attachment to the posthumous child of his eldest son. He made special arrangements for the undisturbed and comfortable stay of his widowed daughter-in-law so that she could rear up the child with utmost care.[29] Iltutmish gave the same name and title of his eldest son to his grandson. A modern Indian historian opines that:

> Iltutmish wanted the young baby (*sic*) to be considered his son and not grandson for dynastic reasons; so that we should not be surprised at the fact that he was called the son (*ibn*) of Iltutmish all his life [30]

Accession : Nasiruddin Mahmud was a young lad of seventeen at the time of his accession to the throne. He is said to have been the governor of Bahraich during the earlier successors of Iltutmish. Obviously, some Shamsi nobles must have carried on the government of that *iqta* on his behalf; after the death of Iltutmish, Nasiruddin's name might have been used as a camouflage to wield the power. He had no ambition to be the king but was rushed to the capital disguised as a woman, along with his mother, and placed on the throne by the conspirators who had done Masudshah to death. Balban was one of the patrons of Nasiruddin though there is reason to believe that he was not one of the assassins of Alauddin Masudshah, who happened to be his son-in-law.

28. Refer to K.A. Nizami in *Comp. HI*, V, p. 256.
29. Minhaj writes that Nasiruddin Mahmud was the youngest son of Iltutmish whose mother 'was sent to a place in the town of Loni where he was brought up and educated as a prince'.—(*Tabaqat i Nasiri*; p. 341). At another place, while describing the events of the 'tenth year of the reign' (653 H or 1255 AD) of sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud, Minhaj informs us that the sultan's mother, Malika i Jahan, married a turkish officer named Qutlugh Khan, (*ibid*; p. 350). It really sounds ridiculous that Iltutmish should send his queen away from the capital, where she and her child could have received the best service and personal attention of the sultan in the royal palace. Secondly, the statement of Minhaj that the child was 'brought up and educated as a prince,' indirectly implies that the child was not a prince by his own right whose father was the reigning sovereign of the day. Thirdly, it looks not only absurd but also impossible that the widow of Iltutmish should get herself remarried to a petty noble of the state, nine years after the death of her illustrious husband. There is every reason to believe that the mother of sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud was the daughter-in-law of Iltutmish, and the widow of his eldest deceased son.
30. K.A. Nizami in *Comp. HI*, V, p. 256.

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Nasiruddin was an educated and intelligent man of gentle and pious nature who had no illusions about the new role assigned to him by the power-hungry turkish nobles. He, therefore, did not take much interest in the state affairs partly because of political expediency; he adopted an attitude of complete self-surrender towards the men in power and played a puppet in their hands. Rather, it would be more appropriate to say that Nasiruddin was the constitutional chief executive of the turkish oligarchy. That is why he became acceptable to all the nobles who were left free to settle between themselves matters of state politics. He kept himself aloof from all administrative problems and did not take any step without the prior consent of the ruling *junta*. Secondly, to his good fortune, an equilibrium was established amidst the nobles in the matter of distribution of the loaves and fishes which ensured place in the state. Had the turkish nobles failed to arrive at a compromise among themselves, and had they split themselves into rival factions on any issue whatever, Nasiruddin might have been put to death like a sacrificial lamb any moment. It was, therefore, also due to his good luck that he enjoyed a peaceful and undisturbed reign for twenty long years.

A theory put forth by some of the modern writers that Nasiruddin was a great military general and administrator who ruled in name as well as in fact, at least upto 1255, is wrong. This line of thought is based upon the misreading of the *Tabaqat i Nasiri* whose celebrated author Minhaj was the chief *qazi* of Delhi under Nasiruddin. He enjoyed patronage of the sultan as well as Balban, the *naib i mamlikat*. Minhaj attributes all the achievements of his period to the sultan and uses hyperbolic words in his praise but a careful perusal of the text clearly reveals the truth as to who constituted the real power behind the throne. For instance, Minhaj states that as governor of Bahraich, Nasiruddin waged successful wars against the infidels, established law and order and, by his wise administrative reforms, made the people happy and prosperous; he thus became famous as a conqueror and successful ruler.[31] Born in 1229-30, Nasiruddin was yet a small boy who might have enjoyed the warmth of his mother's lap when Bahraich was being administered by the turkish officers in his name. He was hardly a boy of sixteen or seventeen when brought to Delhi secretly. The mother and the son were led by a few horsemen and secret agents on foot. Nasiruddin was made to lie in his mother's litter during the day and it was given out that the sick boy was being taken to Delhi for treatment; at night, Nasiruddin put on a *purdah* while riding a horse.[32] It is this circumstance which has prompted some writers to 'show that he was not only ambitious but resourceful too'. It is not difficult to gauge the hollowness of such a claim.

31. *Tabaqat i Nasiri*, p. 342.

32. *ibid.*

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As for the independent status of Nasiruddin while on the throne, Isami tells us that the sultan 'expressed no opinion without their (Shamsi nobles') permission; he did not move his hands or feet except at their order. He would neither drink water nor go to sleep except with their knowledge'. He states clearly that 'Ulugh Khan (Balban) served the king and controlled all his affairs; the king lived in the palace and Ulugh Khan governed the empire.'[33]

Nasiruddin was very gentle, pious and studious. He was devoted to his faith and lived a virtuous life; he had never more than four living wives and no concubines. Partly by nature and partly out of political necessity, he kept himself busy with religious activities. He was a good calligraphist; as a past-time, he used to write copies of the Quran which gave currency to the popular belief that he made his living by selling his scripts alone.[34]

Balban as Nasiruddin's Minister

Owing to his excessively humble and virtuous character, Nasiruddin Mahmud earned public acclaim and the respect and sympathies of the ruling *junta*. He was permitted to choose from among themselves, any turkish noble to be his *wazir*. The sultan expressed the desire to give this office to Ghiasuddin Balban, the ex-governor of Badaun, then *amir i hajib*. Balban, accordingly, took over the *wizarat* with the title of Ulugh Khan by the consent of his colleagues. He won the love and confidence of the young sultan by his courteous and dignified conduct towards him. He further cemented his personal attachment to Nasiruddin by offering the hand of his daughter in marriage[35] to him in 1249. In return, he received the formal title of *naib i mamlikat*[36] or the viceroy, though he had been the *de facto* ruler of the state from the very first day of his appointment as *wazir*. The new *wazir* Abu Bakr acted under the dictates of Balban. The *naib i mamlikat* took care, however, to maintain the formal dignity of the sultan and allowed him to have his say in some non-controversial matters, particularly those in which the self-interest of the Shamsi nobles was not involved. He served Nasiruddin faithfully throughout his reign

33. *Futuhus Salatin*, pp. 150-51.
34. This fact finds mention in Isami's narrative alone. (*ibid*). Of course, the power-hungry Shamsi nobles might have attempted to make a fad of it by bidding very highly for the copies of the Quran written by their puppet sultan.
35. As mentioned earlier, one of Balban's daughters had been married to sultan Alauddin Masudshah also; at a later stage, Balban's own son Bughra Khan was married to the only daughter of Nasiruddin Mahmud by a second wife. The family line of Balban was thus almost merged in the family of Iltutmish and Nasiruddin Mahmud.
36. The office was held in abeyance during the first three years of Nasiruddin's reign.

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except for a brief interval in 1253-54. He strengthened his position gradually by promoting the interests of his kinsmen and friends. His younger brother Kishlu Khan[37] was the *amir i hajib*, later the governor of Nagor, while his cousin Sher Khan Sunqar held the governorship of the *iqtas* of Bathinda and Lahore and possessed the additional supervisory powers over the whole of the north-western frontier.

Achievements of Balban as Minister

There was no government worth the name when Balban took charge as the minister of Nasiruddin. The north-western India had been laid waste by the repeated onslaughts of the mongols: hindu chiefs had become aggressive and the turkish governors of the distant provinces displayed rebellious tendencies. Because of incessant court intrigues, political murders and change of sultans, the prestige of the turkish state had sunk low; anti-social elements made the lives of the people hard in every part of the kingdom.

Balban started the administration on a note of firmness. He geared up the forces of law and order, strengthened the royal army and pursued a vigorous policy in internal as well as external affairs. Minhaj informs us that every winter the 'royal standards', including the sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud, started moving out of the capital at the head of a huge force, commanded by Balban. The enterprising minister launched annual expeditions against the enemies of the state--the mongols, hindu chieftains or the rebellious turkish nobles. Whatever the actual outcome of the military engagements, this policy restored confidence in the hearts of the subjects, particularly, the populace of Delhi; toned up the administration of the *iqtas* visited by the royal entourage and raised the prestige of the central government. It saved the sultanate from further disintegration. The incompetence of disaffected provincial governors and subordinate officers were dealt with by Balban with an iron hand. Balban marked the beginning of Nasiruddin's reign by leading an army, under the beating of the drums, into the Punjab, against the turbulent khokhars and the mongols. The 'royal standards', including the sultan, were encamped on the Ravi while Balban moved through the salt range to the Indus. On the approach of the royal forces, the mongols retired from the country; they had plundered and devastated the region upto Lahore and carried away thousands of people as slaves. Balban was obliged to return 'for want of provender and other necessaries' for the army.[38]

37. Kishlu Khan and Sher Khan Sunqar, the near relations of Balban, proved themselves unworthy of the favours shown to them; they later insubordinated and put Balban to considerable inconvenience.

38. *Tabaqat i Nasiri, op. cit.*, p. 343.
The author, Minhajus Siraj, had accompanied the royal entourage on this campaign. On return to the capital, he received, under His Majesty's orders, the gift of a costly garment and of a house with princely trappings'.--*ibid.*

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

In 1247-48, Balban carried out a punitive expedition against the refractory zamindars of the Doab. A couple of hindu rebels were defeated and their sympathisers crushed mercilessly. The royal standards reached as far as Kara (Allahabad) where Jalaluddin, who held the fief of Kanauj[39], waited upon the sultan. He was a step-brother of Nasiruddin. He was granted the *iqtas* of Sambhal and Badaun *albeit* Balban suspected him of disloyalty. Soon afterwards, Jalaluddin fled to Turkistan and sought shelter with the mongols.

Kishlu Khan was not satisfied with the governorship of Nagor; having been frustrated in his designs to acquire control of Multan and Sind, he turned against Balban. In 1253, a conspiracy was hatched against Balban by some disaffected nobles who felt jealous of his rising power. Imaduddin Raihan, an *Indian muslim*, and Kishlu Khan were the ring-leaders; they enjoyed the blessings of Malika i Jahan, the mother of sultan Nasiruddin.[40] They poisoned the ears of the sultan against Balban and also made an unsuccessful bid to murder the *malik naib*. When Balban came to know of it, he volunteered to resign the post; he was sent to Hansi as its governor and Raihan became the *naib i mamlikat*. He, however, failed to run the government effectively and incurred the displeasure of the sultan. The Shamsi nobles made a common cause with Balban and staged a come-back by show of force. Balban was reinstated *malik naib* with absolute powers of government in his hands. His opponents were pardoned but sent out of the capital on provincial assignments. Raihan was appointed governor of Badaun, Qutlugh Khan that of Oudh while Kishlu Khan was

39. Minhaj gives the following description of this campaign: In the neighbourhood of Kanauj there is a fortified village called Naudana where there is a very strong fort vying with the wall of Alexander. A body of infidel Hindus shut themselves up in this place, resolved to fight to the last extremity. For two days, the royal army carried on a murderous conflict at this village, but at length, the rebels were sent to hell, and the place was subdued.....The author of this work (Minhaj) celebrated the victory and all the events of the campaign in verse. The slaughter of the rebellious infidels, the capture of their fortifications, and the success of Ulugh Khan i Muazzam (Balban) in killing and taking prisoner Dalaki *wa* Malaki (two Hindu chiefs), these and all the other incidents are celebrated fully in the poem to which the author gave the name of his gracious master, and called it *Nasiri Nama*. For this poem, the author received from the sultan the grant of a fine annual allowance, and from Ulugh Khan he received the grant in *in'am* of a village near Hansi. (May God long maintain the seats of their empire and rule!)—*Tabaqat i Nasiri*, pp. 343-44.

40. It was after the fall of Raihan and the failure of this conspiracy that Malika-i-Jahan married a turkish noble Qutlugh Khan, one of the ex-conspirators against Balban, to the great discomfiture of the sultan and ridicule of the populace of Delhi. On the advice of Balban, Qutlugh Khan was given the governorship of Oudh and the ex-queen mother was ordered to join her husband there; her stay in the royal *harem* was thought undesirable and disgraceful.—*Tabaqat i Nasiri*; pp. 348-50.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

directed to take charge of Multan and Uchh and protect the region from falling into the hands of the mongols.[41]

Balban adopted a three-fold policy to consolidate his position and protect the sultanate from disintegration. It comprised (a) suppression of the rebellious turkish nobles, (b) vigilance against the rising power of the hindu chiefs, and (c) stemming the tide of mongol menace. In 1256, Balban's old adversary, Imaduddin Raihan raised a standard of revolt at Badaun with the connivance of Qutlugh Khan, the governor of Oudh. Balban marched upon Badaun with a huge army; Raihan was defeated and killed in the battle. Qutlugh Khan was transferred by Balban from Oudh to Bahraich but he refused to comply with the orders. On the approach of royal armies, however, he fled to the Sirmur hills and took shelter with raja Ranpala of Santagarh. The latter refused to surrender Qutlugh Khan to Balban although his territory was ravaged by the turkish forces in 1257.

The 'infidel' mongols had, by this time, spread their sway over Khurasan, Persia and Afghanistan and the Khyber pass was under their control. Therefore, the north-western India, including Sind, was exposed to their plundering raids. The meagre resources of the sultanate did not permit Balban to launch an all-out offensive against the mongols; all the same, he made effective arrangements for the defence of Delhi against them. In 1255, Jalaluddin, the half-brother of sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud, having failed to secure mongol help for the conquest, returned to India. He acquired control of Lahore and sought apologies from Delhi for his past misconduct. As a shrewd diplomat, Balban conferred on him the governorship of Lahore on behalf of Delhi; his policy was to use him as a buffer between Delhi and the mongols.

Similarly, Kishlu Khan, the governor of Multan and Uchh since 1254, was not loyal to Delhi; he continued to harbour ill-will against Balban. Towards the close of 1257, the mongols advanced into the territories of Uchh and Multan; Kishlu Khan, instead of giving them a fight, acknowledged the suzerainty of Halaku Khan, the mongol ruler of Persia and 'entered into a treaty[42] with the mongols for the joint attack on Delhi. When Balban came to know of it, he made effective arrangements for the defence of the capital and lost no time in establishing diplomatic contacts with Halaku Khan. The mongol emissaries who visited Delhi in 1258-59 were deeply impressed by the military strength, prosperity and popularity of the sultanate. They were convinced about the competence of Delhi to defend its frontiers and, accordingly, refrained from entering into conflict with it. The sinister designs of Kishlu Khan and other turkish deserters from Delhi, therefore, did not materialise. Because of the mongols' presence, however,

41. Minhaj states that 'after all this trouble, the state enjoyed repose; troubles were appeased and wounds were healed.'—*ibid*, p. 355.
42. Minhaj, *Tabaqat i Nisiri*, p. 354.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

the provinces of Lahore, Multan and Sind could not be effectively brought under the control of Delhi during the reign of Nasiruddin Mahmud.

A number of powerful hindu states were re-established along the periphery of the Delhi sultanate in central India and the Gangetic valley; they recovered big slices of territory from the hands of the turks. Balban as minister of Nasiruddin lacked the resources to deal with them forcefully. He led sporadic expeditions in Rajputana, Malwa and Bundelkhand but without any substantial gain. The chandelas were reversed in 1248-49 but Kalinjar could not be recovered. In 1251-52, Balban made an abortive attempt to recapture Gwalior. Between 1248 and 1259, three attempts were made to reconquer Ranthambhor but the turks failed to establish a foothold there. The Mewatis became very powerful during this period; they were bold enough to lay their hands on the turkish military posts in the vicinity of Delhi, plundered the royal treasluries and posed a danger to the safety of the capital itself. Ba ban launched a punitive expedition against them in 1259-60; a num ber of bloody battles were fought though their power could not be crushed. Balban committed atrocities on the populace which were stopped, however, on the personal intervention of the sultan. Balban adopted a defensive attitude towards the powerful hindu chiefs during the reign of Nasiruddin. On the death of the latter in 1266, Balban himself became the sultan.

4 : The Second Ilbari Dynasty

Ghiasuddin Balban (1266-86)

Early Career and Accession : Ghiasuddin Balban also belonged to the ilbari tribe of his master Iltutmish. His original name was Bahauddin. His grandfather is also said to have been a great *khan* 'over ten thousand houses' (*khanas*)[43]. In his youth, he fell into the hands of the mongols, along with some other members of his family.[44] He was sold as a slave to Jamaluddin of Basra, a man of virtue and learning who brought him up 'like a son'.[45] In 1232, Balban was purchased by Iltutmish who 'made him his

43. *Tabaqat i Nasiri*; p. 356.
44. His cousin Sher Khan Sunqar suffered all the vicissitudes of early life along with Balban. His younger brother Kishlu Khan had also been taken prisoner by the mongols but the two brothers were separated while passing through various hands as slaves. In 1232, they re-discovered each other in Delhi when they were purchased by Iltutmish.—*ibid*; pp. 356-57.
45. Minhaj writes that

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personal attendant (*khassa-dar*)'[46]. He quickly rose to be one of 'the Forty'—the most trusted and powerful turkish slave officers of Iltutmish. He reached the pinnacle of power under the weak successors of Iltutmish ; he was *amir i-shikar* (lord of the stables) under Behran and *amir i hajib* (lord chamberlain) under Masud. The territories of Hansi and Rewari were held by him as personal estate. He played a prominent role in the installation of Nasiruddin Mahmud to the throne. At the express desire of the latter, 'the Forty' permitted Balban to take charge of government as *wazir*. He was the *de facto* ruler of the state since 1246 though the title of *naib i mamlikat* or the deputy sultan was received by him in 1249.[47] Balban's cordial relations with Nasiruddin and his role as minister from 1246-66 have already been discussed in the foregoing pages.

Nasiruddin Mahmud is said to have at least four sons and some other male relations who had better claim to the throne on hereditary basis. Nothing is known about their fate on the eve of death of the sultan ; it is however, universally believed that Nasiruddin died after a brief illness, without leaving behind any male heir to the throne. He had probably nominated Balban to the throne before his death. The contention of Isami that Nasiruddin was poisoned to death[48] by Balban does not seem to be true in view of the very affectionate relations that existed between the two. During his long tenure as minister, Balban had thoroughly consolidated his position and was recognised as the most powerful and undisputed leader of all the Shamsi nobles. He already enjoyed the insignia of royalty and was frequently addressed as 'sultan' during the lifetime of Nasiruddin. Therefore, there was no question of any opposition to Balban's accession to the throne[49] in 1266. He

> Khwaja Jamaluddin Basri, a man remarkable for piety and integrity, ability and worth, bought him (Balban), and brought him up carefully like a son. Intelligence and ability shone out clearly in his countenance, so his patron looked upon him with an eye of kindness, and treated him with special consideration.—*Tabaqat i Nasiri*; p. 356.

46. To continue the narrative in the words of Minhaj:

> With several other turks he (Balban) was brought into the presence of the Sultan (Iltutmish). When the monarch observed him, he bought all the lots of turks and appointed them to attend before his throne. Ulugh was seen to be a youth of great promise; so the king made him his personal attendant, placing, as one might say, the hawk of fortune on his hand, so that, in after times, in the reigns of this monarch's children, it might come to pass that this youth should save the kingdom from the violence and machinations of its foes, and raise it to a high pitch of glory and honour.
>
> —*ibid*; pp. 356-57.

47. He received the title of Ulugh Khan (the Great Khan) after successfully repelling a mongol invasion in 1246.

48. *Futuhus Salatin*; pp. 156-57.

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49. A.B. Habibullah opines that,

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enjoyed a long reign of twenty years.

Early Difficulties : Balban was faced with numerous political and administrative problems on his accession to the throne. Owing to the weakness and incompetence of the successors of Iltutmish, the prestige of the crown had sunk very low; the sultan was treated as a puppet by the nobility and detested and held cheap by the people. The turkish nobles, particularly those who belonged to the gang of 'the Forty', had become power-drunk; they were the king-makers; therefore, they rightly considered themselves to be the partners in the state enterprise. The provincial governors were usually insubordinate towards the central government and aggressive, rather autocratic, in the matter of administration of the territories under their charge. The country was exposed to the mongol raids which had been on the increase since the death of Iltutmish. Powerful hindu states in Rajputana and central India had increased their military pressure on the southern borders of the sultanate while the rebellious hindu chieftains in the Doab and the Gangetic valley posed serious law and order problems within the state. The royal treasury was empty; the state revenues could hardly meet the defence requirements. During the reign of Nasiruddin, Balban kept the situation under control for about two decades *albeit* he seems to have maintained the *status quo* without seeking permanent solutions to some of these problems. Once on the throne, Balban took up the task with alacrity, eradicated most of the dangers to the state and consolidated the foundations of the sultanate. He brought about reforms in the internal administration which included gearing up of the machinery of law and order, reorganisation of the army establishment, construction of roads, and appropriate arrangements for the safety of the inter-state traffic. The reform of the department of justice, better arrangements for the collection of taxes and strengthening of the financial condition of the state were other administrative achievements of Balban. He reduced the power of the provincial governors, brought them under greater supervision and control of the central government and discouraged vice and luxury among the nobility.

Reorganisation of Army: First of all, Balban paid his attention to organising the military upon whose strength and solidarity depended the very existence of the state. He reorganised the royal army and put it on a war-footing. The army establishment was separated from the rest of the civil departments; it was taken out of the control of the *wazir* as well as the finance minister. Imadul Mulk, a competent military general and a personal friend of the sultan, was appointed *diwan i ariz* or the army minister with power equivalent to those of the other central ministers. He was made responsible for recruitment, training and equipment, of the soldiers and acted as paymaster general of the army. The *diwan i ariz* looked after the forts and other defences of the state and deployed the royal forces at strategic places *albeit* he did not enjoy the actual

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command of the army; the supreme command of the royal forces, though, reserved, remained in the hands of the sultan.

Qutubuddin Aibek and Iltutmish had introduced the system of granting lands to the military officers in lieu of salaries. Many of these officers had since expired or retired because of old age but their descendants held the fiefs as family heritage. Balban ordered the resumption of all such fiefs whose original grandees had died or their successors did not render military service; pensions were, of course, granted to the widows and other dependants of the deceased fief-holders. This caused a hue and cry among the nobility; they approached Fakhruddin, the aged *kotwal* of Delhi and a friend of the sultan to plead with the latter on their behalf. On his intervention, Balban gave up his wise policy and the old social evil of granting lands to the nobles in lieu of military service continued. The basic composition of the army, therefore remained, as before, feudal in nature. Balban could not introduce revolutionary changes in the army establishment. There was no provision for the maintenance of a permanent standing army though the number of royal guards was raised to several thousands and they constituted, in fact, a well-equipped and highly efficient standing army. The provincial governors, *iqtadars* and other fief-holders provided military contingents to the central government as per specifications as and when required. Through personal interest taken by the sultan and the vigilance of the central government, the efficiency and tone of the feudal contingents was considerably improved.

Restoration of Law and Order: The very first problem of law and order related to the protection of the life and property of the people in and around the capital itself. Barani informs us that during the period of weak successors of Iltutmish, the Meos or Mewatis 'in the neighbourhood of Delhi had grown in power and multiplied in numbers'. They were formed into numerous robber bands and resorted to highway robbery on a large scale. The thick jungles which had 'grown all round Delhi and the unreclaimed land of Hariana, covered with thorny shrubs and sand dunes were their main hide-outs. 'The Meos had become so daring that they sometimes carried their plundering raids within the capital, right 'beneath the walls of the royal palace'. They entered the town at night, broke through the walls into the houses and molested the people in other ways. In the words of Barani, 'the people of Delhi were unable to sleep owing to the fear of the Meos, who had also plundered all the inns in the neighbourhood of Delhi.'[50] Balban

> The king's (Nasiruddin's) lack of vigour threatened to destroy respect for the Crown. A change in throne became necessary even in his own life-time but (Nasiruddin) Mahmud escaped his brother's fate because of the loyal and devoted service of the *naib*, Bahauddin Balban, the Ulugh Khan.
>
> —Foundation of the Muslim Rule in India, by K. M. Ashraf, p. 160.

50. The following narrative of Barani makes an interesting reading:

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adopted stringent measures to deal with this problem. He moved out of the capital and set up his military camp in the heart of the Meo-infested areas. The jungle around Delhi was cleared and roads constructed to facilitate the movement of armies ; a fort was built at Gopalgir and many police posts established in the whole *iqta* of Delhi. Balban meted out a very cruel treatment to the Mewatis and their families; about 'a hundred thousand males above twelve' were massacred in cold blood; their women were enslaved, property pillaged and houses set on fire. Their lands were confiscated and distributed among his enterprising turko-afghan officers. Balban's 'blood and iron' policy bore fruit and, within a year, the capital was made safe from the Mewati menace. The provincial governors were instructed to enforce law and order within their dominions by all means. Barani records[51] that:

> Fear of the governing power, which is the basis of all good government, and the source of the glory and splendour of states, had departed from the hearts of all men, and the country had fallen into a wretched condition. But from the very commencement of the reign of Balban, the people became tractable, obedient and submissive; self-assertion and self-will were thrown aside, and all refrained from insubordination and insolence.

Balban then turned his attention towards the refractory hindu zamindars of the Doab and Oudh (mod. U.P.). The people of these regions were rich and prosperous owing to the fertility of the soil ; they did not pay taxes to the state regularly nor permitted the muslim officers to establish their foothold in their habitats. They resented and offered tough opposition to the muslim settlers in their midst. The people as a whole felt indignation over the loss of their national independence, though to their misfortune, they failed to produce any leader of standing who could unite them to wage a

The roads (leading to and from the capital) were closed on all sides, and it was impossible for the caravans and the traders at the time of the afternoon prayer, and no one had the courage to go out of the city after that time either to visit the sacred tombs or to enjoy by the side of the Sultani (Shamsi) tank. But even before the afternoon prayers, (the Meos) molested the water-carriers and slave-girls, who went to fetch water from the tank; they took off their clothes and left them nude—*Tarikh i Firoze Shahi E&D*, III, Indian reprint (Kitab Mahal), p. 104.

If such was really the case, what had Balban been doing, as the *naib malik* of the Nasiruddin Mahmud, to secure the defences of the capital? May be, the account of Barani is an exaggeration, to highlight the achievements of Balban as the greatest of all the earlier sultans. May be, Balban had been marking time during the last few years to make the people feel the necessity of a strong and powerful monarch.

—(The Author).

51. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*, pp. 99-100.

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freedom struggle against the turkish rule. Balban made up his mind to crush the hindu resistance in these regions for all times to come. He parcelled out the entire Gangetic valley into small *iqtas* or fiefs which were assigned to ambitious turko-afghan officers (*iqtadars*) with the instructions to crush the insubordinate 'infidels' with an iron hand. He built strong forts at Kampil, Patiali and Bhojpur 'which were heavily garrisoned by the state troops, ready to help the *iqtadars* in their punitive expeditions against the hindu rebels. The muslim settlers were granted tax-free land with power to defend themselves by force of arms. Barani writes that the sultan himself 'went to Kampil and Patiali and stayed in these territories for five or six months. He put robers and rebels unhesitatingly to the sword: the route to Hindustan (Oudh) was opened and caravans and merchants could come and go in peace. A lot of the plunder of that region came to Delhi, where slaves and cattle became cheap.'[52]

While in Oudh, Balban received the news of an uprising in Katehr (Bundelkhand). He hastened back, to the capital, mustered a fresh army and marched upon Katehr without any loss of time. He wreaked his vengeance upon the rebels like a tyrant. According to Barani, the sultan ordered general massacre of the male population, 'a stream of blood flowed on the ground'; 'corpses piled up before every village', the stinking of which, polluted the atmosphere, resulting in the spread of epidemics.[53] At a later stage, Balban led one such punitive expedition against the rebellious khokhars of the salt range as well.

Balban's Theory of Kingship: Ghiasuddin Balban was a despotic ruler. He established absolute monarchy by suppressing all opposition to the crown. He traced his descent from the mythical turkish hero Afrasiyab and attempted to create a halo of superiority round the monarchy. He claimed divine sanction for the office of the sultan and fully exploited the religious sentiments of his people to strengthen his hold over the state. The Caliph of Baghdad was no more but Balban continued to inscribe his name on the coins so that his co-religionists might extend their unqualified obedience to him as 'the righthand man of the Caliph' (*nasir amir ul momnin*).

Balban's theory of kingship was akin to that of the 'divine rights of kings' as professed by the Tudor and Stuart monarchs of England. Balban gave currency to the epithet *Zil i llahi* viz., 'the Shadow of God' for himself; it was inscribed on the coins. As 'vice-regent of God on earth', Balban intended to make it known that he was above law as well as the turkish ruling elite who had brought the sultanate into existence; he ruled by 'divine sanction' and was not answerable to any worldly authority for the discharge of his power and functions as sovereign. He thus attempted to raise the status and prestige of the crown by claiming divine powers for it. Obviously 'this was a subtle religious device to sanctify the exercise

52. *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 105.
53. *ibid*; pp. 106-10.

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of his despotic authority.'[54]

Barani gives a detailed treatment to the theory of kingship as propounded by Balban himself; no other sultan of Delhi ever laid stress on it in dialogue and court proceedings like Balban; not even Alauddin Khalji, in the later period, who happened to be the most powerful despotic monarch of the sultanate. The funniest part of it was that Balban never felt tired of delivering sermons on this issue to those Shamsi nobles with whom he had once shared the state as a slave officer of Iltutmish. By propagating such theories, Balban intended to exact reverence and loyalty from the common man *albeit* he made himself a subject of ridicule among his ex-colleagues who read in his rhetorics a blunt warning that they must not consider themselves 'king-makers' any longer and that they would be dealt with severely if they poked their nose into the affairs of the sultan.

In order to establish his claim of divine origin of the sovereign, Balban effected a radical change in his dress, social behaviour and manners. He gave up drinking, cut off the jovial company of his courtiers, banned public drinking by the nobility and acquired aloofness from the people. He assumed a serious and reserved posture towards all, put on magnificent royal costumes and was always accompanied by the imperial paraphernalia. Balban always maintained the external dignity, bore frowned looks and displayed an awe-inspiring personality. Barani writes that after his accession to the throne, even the domestic servants of Balban never saw him without royal apparel, socks and the headgear.[55] He was a typical 'oriental despot' who displayed his autocratic power and the grandeur and prosperity of his realm through his court. He organised a grand *durbar* on the Persian model which became famous throughout central Asia for its pomp and magnificence; all that the imagination could conceive of royal splendour was embodied in it. His courtiers put on prescribed costumes made of fine silken, woollen and cotton garments, studded with jewels, diamonds and gold ornaments. Balban sat on a huge throne, bedecked with rich drapery and precious diamonds which dazzled the eyes of the onlookers; behind the sultan stood his guards tall and muscular turkish slaves, in rich attire and heavily armed, with drawn-out swords. *Sijda* or prostration and *paibos* or kissing of the feet of the sultan were the normal forms of salutation in the court which left the nobility and visitors utterly humbled, terror-stricken and dumb-founded. Stern discipline was enforced in the *durbar*; the courtiers and foreign dignitaries occupied their seats in a specified manner, all but two representatives of the Caliph,[56] had to

54. K.A. Nizami in *Comp. HI*, V, p. 281.

55. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 100.

56. Even they were made to sit on ordinary seats much lower than the royal throne.

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keep standing throughout the court proceedings. None was permitted to speak without the permission of the sultan; he himself spoke but very little and that only to the highest dignitaries. He never laughed nor allowed any courtier to smile in his presence; none dared to interrupt the sultan or defy his orders.

Balban discriminated between the high-born and the low-born people; the former were further given unequal treatment on racial considerations. He never gave high posts to the non-turks or men of doubtful antecedents. Noble pedigree became a fad with him. Kamal Mahiya, a capable military officer and administrator was not appointed *iqtadar* of Amroha just because he turned out to be the son of a hindu convert; even those high officials who had recommended his name for the appointment were reprimanded and punished. As a matter of fact, Balban suffered from an inferiority complex which tempted him to assume a haughty and aggressive demeanour against the commoners; his prejudicial conduct towards the ruling elite was in no way conducive to the well being of the Delhi sultanate and its grandees.

Balban conducted himself as a deeply religious man; he offered the daily prayers and observed other Islamic rituals with regularity. He paid respects to the *ulemas* and the saints, and held discusions with them on *shariat* and religious philosophy. He was eager to make himself popular as the just monarch among his subjects because the administration of even-handed justice was known to be a divine quality. He, however, threw all norms of justice, humanitarianism or moral consideration to the winds while dealing with his opponents, and committed inhuman barbarities on the innocent subjects under the pretext of restoring law and order.[57]

Liquidation of 'the Forty': A number of Shamsi nobles belonging to 'the Forty' held high offices as ministers, military generals and provincial governors when Balban became the sultan. Individually, they were no match for Balban nor did they challenge his claim to the throne. Having been one of them, Balban, however, knew fully well that they were highly ambitious, resourceful and cunning politicians; they had collectively been responsible for downgrading the office of the sultan by usurping the royal powers and prerogatives. Balban apprehended that, given the opportunity, they would not hesitate in establishing their dominance over him. Balban was,

57. Firishta describes the atrocities committed by Balban on the innocent subjects at Lakhnauti at the time of Tughril's revolt, in these words:

> Gheias-ood-Deen Balban, finding the enemy had dispersed, returned to Bengal, and put to death every member of the rebel's family. He did not even spare the innocent women and children; and he carried his rigour so far as to order the execution of a hundred holy mendicants, together with their chief Kullundur.

—John Briggs, *History of the Rise of Mahomedan Power in India Till the Year 1611 AD*. Translated from the original Persian of Mahomed Kasim Ferishta, 4 Vols, (London, 1829), Indian reprint Calcutta, 1966, I, pp. 147-48.

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however, keen to establish an absolute monarchy and the Shamsi nobles were the greatest stumbling block in the realisation of this objective. He, therefore, made up his mind to blunt their striking power; his desire was to remove the ladder by which he had once risen to the exalted office of the sultan. Balban adopted a slow but steady policy to undermine the political status and reduce the military power of these nobles. Many of them were sent out of the capital on dangerous and risky assignments; military generals were usually kept on the move. A number of Shamsi nobles were posted as *iqtadars* in the north-western region with the apparent object of checkmating the mongol menace. Their concentration in a strategic region produced interesting results. The mongol posed a constant danger to their security and called for concerted efforts to deal with them. The Shamsi nobles failed to coordinate their military efforts, found fault with each other on lapses in the defence arrangements and exhibited feelings of mutual jealousy. Those who suffered defeats at the hands of the mongols were dismissed, disgraced or executed by Balban.

Balban ordered frequent transfers of the provincial governors so that they might not develop vested interests at any particular place. He was a racialist who gave preference to the turks over all other communities of the muslims; he promoted many junior turkish officers to higher posts and put them at par with 'the Forty', who were also turks but with the special characteristic that all of them had once been the slaves of Iltutmish. Gradually, an entirely new class of the turkish nobility came into existence which transplanted the Shamsi nobles.

Balban adopted a dominating and rather stern attitude towards each of the Shamsi nobles. He took them to task for the minor lapses in the discharge of their official duties and inflicted deterrent punishment on the defaulters. A report was received by him that malik Baqbak, the governor of Badaun, had beaten a servant to death; the malik was flogged publicly, demoted and disgraced. Haibat Khan, the governor of Oudh, while under the influence of drink, put a man to death. He was whipped publicly, receiving 500 stripes on his bare body which left him in a pool of blood. He was then handed over to the widow of the deceased who was authorised to stab him to death; the kinsmen of Haibat Khan secured his release from the woman by paying a compensation of 20,000 *tankas* but the noble died of his wounds soon after. Sher Khan Sunqar, the cousin of Balban, had been one of his trusted friends and close allies since the beginning of their career as slave officers of Iltutmish. A capable military general, Sunqar stood as a bulwark against the mongol marauders on the north-western frontier. He, however, incurred the displeasure of Balban because he failed to turn up in Delhi and pay personal salutations to him at the time of his coronation. Balban began to distrust him and

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ultimately got him poisoned to death[58] in 1270.

Balban set up a network of newswriters and spies (*barids*) throughout his dominions. They received fat salaries and acted under the direct control of the sultan, quite independent of the provincial governors and military generals. They despatched prompt reports to the sultan about all the important developments in their areas of posting, and kept a strict watch over the activities of all the high-ups, including the ministers, the princes and other members of the royal household. The spies and newswriters were severely punished if they failed to submit correct and prompt reports to the sultan about the wrongful activities of the nobility. The newswriter of Badaun, who had failed to report against malik Baqbak, was hanged on the city-gate of Badaun.[59] The efficient spy system of Balban struck terror in the hearts of the government employees, strengthened the hold of the central government over them and helped the sultan in the establishment of an absolute monarchy.

Suppression of Revolt in Bengal (1279-81) : The year 1279 was a critical year for Balban. He was confined to bed with illness and there seemed to be no hope of his survival. About this time, the mongols launched a massive attack on the north-west frontier; the royal army led by prince Muhammad was locked up in a deadly conflict with them. At this critical juncture, Tughril Khan, the governor of Bengal, declared his independence; incidentally, he had been one of the most trusted slave officers of Balban himself. The sultan ordered Amin Khan, the governor of Oudh, to bring him to his knees; he was defeated and repulsed by Tughril. Balban called the defeated general to Delhi and executed him. The second royal army led by Tirmati Khan also suffered defeat at the hands of Tughril; Tirmati was beheaded at the sultan's orders. It alerted the military generals who hastened to offer their services to suppress the revolt. Balban was not the man to bear these defeats lying down; in spite of his failing health, he himself commanded the third army of invasion; more than two *lakhs* of additional troopers were supplied by the *iqtadars* of the Gangetic valley and thousands of boats plied the Ganges to facilitate the movement of soldiers and supplies. On hearing of the sultan's approach, Tughril Khan lost his heart and fled the capital, which was occupied by the royal armies without a fight. Tughril took shelter in the jungles of Jajnagar (Orissa) but was discovered and killed; his head was presented to the sultan. Balban gave vent to his barbaric emotions by wreaking vengeance on all the friends, supporters and relatives of Tughril.[60]

58. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; pp. 108-09.

59. *ibid*; p. 101.

60. Barani explains the aftermath of Tughril's revolt as follows:
The sultan returned to Lakhnauti and there erected the gibbets should be erected along both sides of the great *bazar*, which was

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Bughra Khan, the second son of Balban, was appointed governor of Bengal with the stern warning by the sultan that if ever he revolted against Delhi, he would meet a similar fate. The prince felt so much dejected at the barbarous deeds of Balban that later on he declined the offer of the dying father to accept nomination to the throne.[61]

Defence of Northwestern Frontier : When Balban became the sultan, his cousin Sher Khan Sunqar held charge of the north-western frontier. He defended the region from the mongol in-roads with ability and courage. On his death in 1270, the crown prince Muhammad was deputed to be the warden of the marches with general supervisory powers over the provinces of Lahore, Multan and Uchh. Balban created a second line of defence under the command of his second son Bughra Khan. The latter was given charge of the *iqtas* of Sunam, Samana and Dipalpur. He held under his control a chain of forts at all the strategic places; these were heavily garrisoned by the state troops. Balban himself stayed in the capital as far as possible[62] and personally supervised the defence arrangements made against the mongol penetration into his dominions. A special force of 30,000 well-equipped cavalry was kept in reserve exclusively to reinforce the border contingents at a moment's notice. On the whole, Balban's policy to checkmate the mongol menace was defensive in nature; he did not attempt to liberate the whole of northwestern region from them. The major towns of Lahore, Multan and Uchh were, of course, kept under control by the royal troops though at a heavy cost in men and material.

> more than a *kos* in length. He ordered all the sons and sons-in-law of Tughril, and all men who had served him or borne arms for him, to be slain and placed upon the gibbets...The punishments went on during the two or three days that the sultan remained at Lakhnauti and the beholders were so horrified that they nearly died of fear. I, (the author) have heard from several old men that such punishment was inflicted on (*sic*) Lakhnauti as had never been heard of in Delhi, and no one could remember anything like it in Hindustan.
>
> —*Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; pp. 119-20.

61. *ibid*; pp. 120-21 & 123.

62. Barani has the following to say on the subject:

> The intimate friends and officers of Balban often said to him, "How is it that with your well-equipped and disciplined army, you do not undertake any distant campaign, and never move out of your territory to conquer other regions ?"
>
> The Sultan replied, "These accursed wretches (mongols) have heard of the wealth and prosperity of Hindustan, and have set their hearts upon conquering and plundering it. They have taken and plundered Lahore, within my territories, and no year passes that they do not come here and plunder the villages. They watch the opportunity of my departure on a distant campaign to enter my cities and ravage the whole Doab. They even talk about the conquest and sack of

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In 1285, the mongol leader Timur Khan of Afghanistan launched a major attack on the Punjab. Prince Muhammad gave him a bold fight but lost his life in the combat, and the towns of Lahore and Dipalpur were plundered by the marauders. The provinces of Multan and Uchh were, however, protected from the mongol fury by the royal troops under the command of Kai Khusrau, the youthful son of the deceased prince Muhammad.

Balban could not survive the shock of the untimely death of the crown prince and died a broken-hearted man about the middle of 1287. He was in his eightieth year at the time of his death.

An Estimate

Balban was one of the greatest sultans of Delhi. A great warrior, administrator and statesman, he established an absolute monarchy and consolidated the turkish rule in northern India. He did not resort to fresh conquests but kept a firm hold over the territorial heritage of his illustrious master Iltutmish. Together, they laid the foundations of the turkish rule in Delhi so deep that, soon afterwards, under the reign of Alauddin Khalji, it was transformed into the imperial government of India which held its sway, directly or indirectly, over the whole of the sub-continent and lasted five centuries. Balban protected the sultanate from internal disorders and external danger from the mongols; he restored perfect law and order within his dominions and crushed the insubordinate officials and anti-social elements with an iron hand. He not only propounded the theory of divine rights of kingship but also possessed a high sense of the sovereign's duty.[63] He was extremely conscientious and hardworking man. He administered even-handed justice to the public and showed no mercy even to his kith and kin if found guilty. His punishments were rather excessive and cruel which struck terror in the hearts of the people. A strong disciplinarian,

> Delhi. I have devoted all the revenues of my sources and prepared to receive them. I never leave my kingdom, nor will I go to any distance from it.
>
> —*Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; pp. 102-03.

63. Barani writes that

> Sultan Ghiyasuddin Balban was a man of experience in matters of government. From being a *mailk* he became a *khan*, and from being a *khan* he became a king. When he attained the throne, he imparted to it new lustre, he brought the administration into order, and restored to efficiency institutions whose power had been shaken or destroyed. The dignity and authority of government were restored, and his stringent rules and resolute determination caused all men, high and low, throughout his dominions, to submit to his authority. Fear and awe of him took possession of all men's hearts but his justice and his consideration for his people won the favour of his subjects and made them zealous supporters of his throne.
>
> —*Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 99.

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Balban demanded abject submission and loyalty from the nobility and brooked no laxity in the administrative affairs on the part of the government officers. He was a great patron of learning; a galaxy of scholars, saints and poets, including Amir Khusrau (1253-1325) 'the parrot of India' (*Tuti e Hind*), adorned his court. He presented an ideal moral character and exhorted his children and nobles to do likewise. He was devoted to the faith, spent his leisure in the company of the saints and scholars and extended liberal patronage to them. He was very respectful towards the *ulema* though he did not permit them to interfere in state affairs. By granting asylum and huge privy purses to the central Asian fugitive princes, Balban won their goodwill and made himself famous in the far-off lands. As a consequence, brilliant scholars, military generals, administrators from the muslim countries flocked to his court for service and settlement in India.

Balban's Successors

Balban cemented the foundations of the sultanate of Delhi *albeit* he was not destined to perpetuate his ruling dynasty on the throne of Delhi; the premature death of the crown prince Muhammad sounded its death-knell during the very life-time of Balban. His second son Bughra Khan was content with his rule over Bengal; he did not oblige his dying father by accepting his nomination to the throne. Balban was, therefore, constrained to nominate Kai Khusrau, the promising son of prince Muhammad to succeed him to the throne, and died three days later. The turkish nobles, led by Fakhruddin, the aged *kotwal* of Delhi, did not honour their master's will and placed Kaikubad, the seventeen-year old son of Bughra Khan on the throne; Kai Khusrau was sent out of the capital as governor of Multan and Uchh. It led to a sharp division among the nobles which proved disastrous for the ruling family of Balban.[64] Kaiqubad indulged in sensual pleasures and the power of the state was usurped by Nizamuddin, a son-in-law of Fakhruddin. Nizamuddin started the evil game of liquidating his rivals; by his orders, Kai Khusrau, the rival claimant to the throne, was secretly put to death. Nizamuddin was, in turn, poisoned to death by Kaiqubad, on a confidential advice received from his father Bughra Khan. About this time, Kaiqubad, to his misfortune, suffered from a stroke of paralysis and was incapacitated when he was hardly

64. In the words of Barani,

> From the day that Balban, the father of his people, died, all security of life and property was lost, and no one had any confidence in the stability of the kingdom. Muizzuddin (Kaiqubad) had not reigned a year before the chiefs and nobles quarrelled with doubt; and the people, seeing the troubles and hardships which had befallen the country, sighed for a renewal of the reign of Balban.
>
> —*Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 125.

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twenty. It signalled the outbreak of near anarchy in the state; the rival factions of the nobles came into open clash with each other. In 1290, Jalaludin Khalji, the governor of Samana and leader of one of the factions, occupied Delhi by a military coup and declared himself the sultan. Kaiqubad was kicked to death by a Khalji soldier and thrown into the Jumuna while his infant son Kaimurs died in confinement in March 1290. The ruling dynasty of Balban thus came to an end within three years of his death; it also marked the end of the so-called Slave dynasty, founded by Qutubuddin Aibek.

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6

Khalji Imperialism

1 : Jalaluddin Firoze Khalji (1290-96)

The Khalji Revolution

The khaljis were one of the sixty-four clans of the turks. They migrated to modern Afghanistan in the fourth century of the Christian era where they gradually adopted afghan socio-cultural traits and were usually mistaken for them.[1] They joined the armies of Mahmud and Muhammad Ghori in large numbers and won applause from their masters for loyal and efficient service. When Muhammad Ghori was defeated and badly wounded in the first battle of Tarain (1190 A.D.) at the hands of Prithvi Raj III chauhan, a khalji soldier saved his life and drove him to safety. Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khalji rose to be a military general of Muhammad Ghori, and he was given a free hand by the sultan in the conquest of Bihar and Bengal; he was rewarded with appointment as the governor of the conquered territories under the overall supervision of Qutubuddin Aibek, the viceroy of Delhi. Under the independent rule of Aibek and the successive sultans of Delhi, the governorship of Bihar and Bengal was held by the khalji nobles almost as a matter of right; a couple of them even dared to set up as independent rulers at Lakhnauti and defied the central authority of Delhi. They afforded ample opportunities to the men of their clan to secure civil and military assignments. Incidentally, the mongols carried fire and sword into the valleys of Helmand and Kabul in the beginning of the thirteenth century, which compelled the khaljis to migrate *en mass* to India and swell the ranks of the muslim immigrants who made settlements

1. Barani records that Jalaluddin Khalji, the founder of the dynasty, 'came of a race different from that of the turks, so that he had no confidence in them, nor would the turks own him as belonging to the number of their friends.' *Tarikh-e-Firoze Shahi*, E&D, III, Indian reprint (Kitab Manal), p. 134.

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in the Gangetic valley as agriculturists and soldiers. They constituted the masses among the muslim settlers; a few of their leaders occupied but subordinate administrative and military posts under the sultans of Delhi. They had no claims to political power in Turkistan or Afghanistan nor were they recognised as a part of the ruling elite of Delhi. The mamluk founders of the Delhi sultanate introduced racialism in muslim politics to serve their personal ends: they exercised racial discrimination at higher level with a vengeance—each of the three prominent rulers, Aibek, Iltutmish and Balban, created new classes of the nobility, composed exclusively of their own turkish slave officers. Such a policy was not conducive to the welfare of the nascent Islamic state in India because it invariably led to a tug of war between the rival factions of the nobility. The capital was constantly plagued by court intrigues, disaffection and political murders, occasionally bursting forth into open revolts and bloodbaths which did not spare the sultans either. This game of power-politics, based on racial considerations, proved disastrous for the muslim nobility as a class which constituted the backbone of the sultanate; it wiped out many a capable military general, administrator and scholar and deprived the state of their useful services. Balban made racialism and genealogy a fad in the matter of recruitment to higher services. It provoked widespread resentment among the muslim masses whose number was ever on the increase by the addition of hindu converts and foreign immigrants. It gave a setback to the promising youth amongst them who aspired to secure gainful employment and build their careers on personal merit; they were alienated against the privileged aristocrary as it had come into existence during the rule of the mamluk sultans. Jalaluddin Khalji, the governor of Samana under Kaiqubad, belonged to the unprivileged muslim masses who came to acquire a position of prominence at the royal court. Therefore, when he carried out a military coup against the successors of Balban, he enjoyed by and large the co-operation, support and good wishes of the muslim masses although the aristocracy of Delhi took some time to shed their prejudice against the man, representing the wretched of the soil who had dared to claim the throne.[2] The accession to the throne of Jalaluddin Khalji was, therefore, not a mere change of dynasty; it signified a revolution in the muslim politics of India. It marked the end of an epoch of racial discrimination among the ruling elite and sounded the death-knell of the

2. Barani writes that:

> In the course of the first year of his reign, the citizens and soldiers and traders of all degrees and classes went to Ki ughari, where the sultan held a public *darbar*. They were struck with admiration and amazement at seeing the Khaljis occupying the throne of the turks, and wondered how the throne had passed from the one to the other.
>
> —*Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 136.

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privileged turkish nobility who had perpetuated their dominance in muslim politics for nearly a century. Considered from this angle, it would be wrong to say that with the establishment of the khalji dynasty, there started an era of muslim rule in Delhi as compared with the turkish rule of the earlier phase.

Early Career of Jalaluddin Khalji

Jalaluddin Khalji did not claim an aristocratic pedigree; he started his career as a petty soldier under Iltutmish or Balban. During the reign of the latter, he was posted in the northwestern region as a military commander of subordinate rank. At the time of Balban's death, Jalaluddin was the *iqtadar* of Samana; he was then an old man of sixty-seven who had spent nearly the whole of his life in the faithful and devoted service to the sultanate. He had fought many a successful action against the mongols and earned reputation as seasoned soldier and capable administrator. He had carved out a respectable place for himself among the old grandees of the sultanate purely by dint of merit. He was a man of non-political nature who seldom associated himself with the court cliques or military groups formed by the privileged turkish nobility. Jalaluddin acquired a foothold at the royal court during the short reign of Kaiqubad (1287-90) when he was appointed *sar i jandar*—'the chief of the royal bodyguards' by the young sultan. After the death of Mulik Nizamuddin, Jalaluddin was made governor of Baran and *ariz i mumalik*—'the chief of the army staff' and conferred the title of Shaista Khan; thereafter, his rise to power was quick. He at once shot into prominence as the champion of the hitherto unprivileged subordinate military officers, including the youthful and ambitious khaljis, Taziks (freeborn turks) and 'Indian muslims' (hindu converts to Islam and their offsprings) who had been deprived of higher offices under Balban because of racial considerations. For the first time in the history of the sultanate of Delhi a balance of power was struck between the privileged turkish nobility and the other muslim officers at the court. The former were represented by malik Aitmar Kachhan, the *amir i barbak*, and malik Aitmar Surkha, the *vakil i dar*; when they attempted to re-allocate higher offices on racial basis so as to re-establish the dominance of the privileged turks, they met with vehement opposition from the young khalji and the Indian muslim officers. The two Aitmars hatched a conspiracy to put their rivals, including Jalaluddin Khalji, to death[3] but the latter got wind of it and carried out a military coup in retaliation; Kachhan and Surkha were killed. As recorded earlier, the bedridden Kaiqubad, who had suffered from a stroke of paralysis was also killed and thrown into the Jumna[4] while his infant son Kaimurs was carried away to the leader of the

3. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 134.
4. *ibid.*, pp. 134-35.

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revolution, Jalaluddin, at the army camp. Jalaluddin emerged as the undisputed master of the state but, even at this stage, he hesitated in assuming the reins of government in his own hands. He offered the regency of the child-sultan first to Malik Chhajju, a nephew of Balban, and then to Fakhruddin, the old *kotwal* of Delhi and once a personal friend of Balban, but both of them declined the offer. Jalaluddin declared himself the regent of sultan Kaimurs reluctantly, struck coins in the name of Kaimurs and carried on the administration on his behalf for about three months when his youthful Khalji nobles persuaded him to declare himself the sultan in June 1290; Kaimurs was thrown into the jail and put to death soon afterwards.

Domestic Policy : Jalaluddin Khaji crowned himself at Kailugharhi[5] in the vicinity of Delhi; he stayed away from the old capital for about a year until its inhabitants, particularly the aristocratic families, were fully reconciled to the change of dynasties and the democratisation of power-politics. He won them over by his virtuous habits, generosity and good government. He accorded liberal treatment to his political opponents, most of whom were allowed to retain their old offices. He offered higher posts to the young Khalji and other military commanders *albeit* the old guards, including *malik ul umara* Fakhruddin, the *kotwal* of Delhi, Khwaja Khatir, the *wazir*, and Malik Chhajju, the governor of Kara and Manikpur (Oudh), were all confirmed in their old assignments and granted official privileges. Jalaluddin agreed to move to Delhi only when a deputation of the leading citizens waited upon him and pleaded with him to grace the capital by his presence[6].

Jalaluddin ruled for six years but he never considered himself fit to occupy the exalted office of the sultan and dared not sit on the magnificent throne of Balban whom he had served all his life as a humble servant. His utmost humility and tenderness won applause from the common man *albeit* the ambitious khalji nobles, who had helped his rise to power, felt frustrated and demoralised; they considered the conduct of Jalaluddin to be below the dignity of a sovereign which downgraded the new ruling house in the estimation of the public. They were eager to control the entire state-machinery by replacing the old aristocracy and restoring the pomp and grandeur of Balban's days. Jalaluddin deprived them of the real

5. Kilughari, Kilukhari or Kilokheri.
6. In the words of Barani,

> Some time passed, and still the sultan did not go into the city (Delhi), but the authority of his government acquired strength. The excellence of his character, his justice, generosity, and devotion, gradually removed the aversion of the people (aristocracy), and hopes of grants of land assisted in conciliating, though grudgingly and unwillingly the affection of his people...and the sultan, with great pomp and a fine retinue, went into the city and alighted at the palace (*Daulat Khana*).
>
> —*Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; pp. 136-37.

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taste of power and failed to inspire respect and confidence among the leaders of the revolution. They dubbed him as senile—a physical and mental wreck who was unfit and unworthy of conducting the affairs of the state. No wonder, they gradually rallied round his youthful nephew and son-in-law Alauddin Khalji who symbolised their aspirations and the lust for power. A few instances of Jalaluddin's weak policy would suffice to show their disenchantment with the old sultan.

Malik Chhajju, the chief survivor of Balban's family, was allowed to take all the other members of the Ilbari aristocracy to Kara. Within three months of Jalaluddin's accession to the throne, Chhajju raised a standard of revolt against Delhi in collaboration with some refractory hindu zamindars of the Gangetic valley. He assumed the title of sultan Mughisuddin, struck coins and got the *khutba* read in his name. He was defeated and taken prisoner along with hundreds of his followers. Jalaluddin was overwhelmed to see the ex-ruling elites of Delhi in chains and ordered their release to the great chagrin of the Khalji nobles who had shed their blood in suppressing the revolt. The ex-rebels were fetted and toasted and restored to their lost material fortunes; Malik Chhajju was sent to Multan to lead a comfortable life under the general surveillance of its governor Arkali Khan, the second son of the sultan. Malik Ahmad Chap, a sister's son of the sultan who held the office of *amir i barbak*, publicly criticised Jalaluddin for this uncalled for generosity shown to the enemies of the state[7] but the sultan justified his conduct on humanitarian grounds.

There was a marked deterioration in the general law and order situation ever since the death of Balban. The roads around the capital were infested by the highway robbers once again. The sultan took prompt measures to suppress their nefarious activities but refrained from imitating the 'blood and iron' policy of Balban in inflicting punishments. He let them off after administering a warning that they would never again resort to anti-social activities. It is said that a thousand of the *thugs* were put in the state-owned boats, provided with food-stuffs and banished to Bengal on securing the promise that they would not return to his kingdom in future.[8] How far these extraordinary humanitarian measures proved successful in reforming the criminals is not known ; it is however certain that his weak policy towards the anti-social elements lowered the prestige of the state and made him a laughing stock of the people.

Execution of Sidi Maula : There was, however, one exception to the above-mentioned lenient policy of Jalaluddin; it related to the execution of a *darvesh* named Sidi Maula. He came to Delhi from

7. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; pp. 138-40.
8. *ibid.*, p. 141.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Persia[9] in the reign of Balban and was initiated to *Sufism* by Shaikh Fariduddin *Ganj i Shakar* of Pakpatan (Ajodhan). Sidi Maula was a godly fellow of high moral character who, according to Barani, lived a simple and frugal life ; he 'kept no servant or handmaid' and 'took nothing from any one.'[10] Amongst his followers and advisers were included quite a few nobles and liberal-minded *ulema*. After Balban's death, there was tremendous increase in the number of Sidi Maula's followers. His *khanqah* became a place of pilgrimage for thousands who came from far and near to seek his blessings. They were served with free meals at the *khanqah* ; obviously, arranged by a self-constituted committee of local patrons and provided out of the donations in cash and kind, received from the devotees. In the words of Barani, 'twice a day, such bounteous and various meals were served as no *khan* or *malik* could furnish'.[11] It became an extra cause of attraction for the capital's urchins who thronged the *khanqah* and feasted themselves at the free kitchen. Sidi Maula approved of all these festivities and mixed up freely with the highups of the state. It is said that during the course of a visit to Pakpatan, 'he was advised by Shaikh Farid to have nothing to do with *maliks* and *amirs* and beware of their intimacy as dangerous' because 'no *darvesh* ever kept up such an intimacy, but in the end found it disastrous'.[12] Sidi Maula did not, however, heed the advice of Shaikh Farid and ultimately landed himself into trouble.

It so happened that Sidi Maula's *khanqah* became a meeting place for the disaffected and ambitious nobles who did not see eye to eye with the newly established Khalji rule. They hatched a conspiracy to murder Jalaluddin Khalji when the latter 'went in state to the *Jama Masjid* on *Sabbath*', and proclaim Sidi Maula to be the *khalifa*. If was also proposed that in order to establish his claim to the throne, Sidi Maula would marry a daughter of the late sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud. Sidi Maula was made a party to the intrigue through the evil office of 'a mischievous man' Qazi Jalal Kashani. As luck would have it, one of the pessons present at a secret meeting of the conspirators carried information to the sultan. Sidi Maula and other conspirators were apprehended and produced in the *durbar*. They 'strenuously denied the charge' and the sultan became agreeable to give them mild punishments by way of a reprimand.

To his misfortune, however, Sidi Maula, because of his liberal religious views and unorthodox practices, had aroused the hosility of some fanatical *mullas* too. Barani states that he 'had peculiar notions about religion' and, to the great chagrin of the conservative

9. Then known as the *wilayat i mulk i bal* —'the upper country'.
10. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*, p. 144.
11. *ibid.*, p. 144.
12. *ibid.*

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

mullas, 'never went to public prayers in the mosque'. They, therefore, dubbed him an heretic and wanted him to be liquidated. One of their leaders, Shaikh Abu Bakr Tusi, was present in the *durbar* with a number of his followers when Sidi Maula was presented to the sultan in handcuffs. The *darvesh* engaged the sultan in an altercation, who, in a fit of anger, turned towards Tusi and his disciples and said,

O' Darvesh ! avenge me of the Maula.[13]

Thereupon, one of Tusi's men, pounced upon Sidi and 'cut him several times with a razor'. Arkali Khan[14] had been watching this incident from the balcony of the palace ; he made an instant 'sign to an elephant driver who drove his elephant over Sidi and trampled him under its feet'. It was thus that Sidi Maula met with his tragic end at the hands of 'the most humane king' who could not endure the plotting of a *darvesh*, and gave an order which broke through their prestige and sanctity.[15] The execution of Sidi Maula has left a blot on the otherwise fair name of sultan Jalaluddin Khalji.

Encounter with the Mongols 1292 A. D. : Abdulla, a grandson of Halaku Khan, invaded India in 1292 at the head of 1.5 *lakh* mongols. They spread themselves all over the northwestern region and penetrated as far as Sunam which was plundered and laid waste. Jalaluddin moved swiftly from the capital and defeated the mongols in a number of bloody actions. Abdulla made peace with Delhi and returned to Afghanistan while thousands of the mongols, who had been taken prisoners, embraced Islam and were allowed to settle down in India. In order to win their goodwill, the sultan offered the hand of one of his daughters to their leader Ulghu Khan, a descendant of Chengez Khan. The mongol converts were called 'new musalmans and their settlement near Delhi came to be known as Mugalpura. The youthful Khalji nobles criticised Jalaluddin for having followed a policy of appeasement towards the mongols. As a matter of fact, it was a great achievement of Jalaluddin that he had been successful in the propagation of Islam among the mongols. The mongol converts espoused the cause of Jalaluddin's family and created troubles for Alauddin Khalji at a later stage.

Campaigns Against Rajputs: Jalaluddin's foreign policy is also said to have been 'weak and imbecile'; his feeble-mindedness and tender nature cast its reflection on his dealings with the neighbouring rajput states. He led an expedition against Ranthambhor in 1290; the fort, though conquered by Qutubuddin

13. Barani, *Tarikh. Firoze Shahi*; p. 145.
14. Then the heir apparent to the throne because his elder brother *Khan i Khanan* had died a premature death in 1290 A.D.
15. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*, p. 146.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Aibek, had been lost to the chauhan rajputs after the death of Iltutmish. The rajputs offered a tough resistance and compelled Jalaluddin to raise the siege. The sultan returned to Delhi with the plea that the fort 'could not be conquered without sacrificing the lives of many mussalmans' and that he 'did not value the fort so much as the heir of one mussalman'.[16] The only gain of the expedition was the annexation of a small district of Jhain.

In 1292, Jalaluddin Khalji led yet another expedition against the rajputs. The fort of Mandor, situated about four miles to the north of Jodhpur, was recovered from Samant Singh Chauhan; the royal army plundered the neighbourhood and returned to Delhi with a huge booty. The object of this expedition seemed to have been to exercise military pressure upon Ranthambhor and prepare ground for the future conquest of that chauhan citadel.

Alauddin's Expeditions: Jalaluddin Khalji's reign is marked by two more successful expeditions against the hindu rulers; these were, however, led not by the sultan but by his youthful nephew and son-in-law Alauddin (Ali Gurshasp) Khalji, the governor of Kara since 1291. With the permission of Delhi, Alauddin led a surprise attack on Bhilsa (1292 A.D.), situated on the road to Ujjain, and put it to plunder. He carried a huge booty, including gold and silver, elephants and horses, to Delhi to the great delight of sultan Jalaluddin. As a reward for this brilliant exploit, the sultan appointed him *ariz i mumalik*—'the minister of war', and doubled his administrative assignment by adding Oudh to the *iqta* of Kara.

It was at Bhilsa that Alauddin Khalji heard of the richness and prosperity of the country of Devagiri or Deogir (Daulatabad in modern Maharashtra), situated between the Vindhya mountains and the river Krishna. It was ruled by Ram Chandra Deva (1271-1310) of the Yadava dynasty. Under the wise and benevolent rule of its kings, the people of Devagiri had enjoyed internal peace and freedom from external invasions for over a century; they had flourishing trade and commerce relationships with the overseas countries.[17] Initial success at Bhilsa, emboldened Alauddin to plan a bigger expedition against Devagiri and lay his hands upon the fabulous wealth of the south which had so far

16. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; pp. 146-47.
17. According to Barani,

> The people of that country (Devagiri) had never heard of the Mussalmans; the Mahratta land had never been punished by their (muslim) armies; no Mussalman king or prince had penetrated so far. Deogir was exceedingly rich in gold and silver, jewels and other valuables.
>
> —*Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 150.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

remained free from muslim invaders. He made vigorous preparations for over two years for the proposed enterprise; and secured adequate information, through the native travellers as well as his own spies, regarding the southern route and the political developments of the region *albeit* he kept his plan a closely guarded secret. Alauddin obtained sanction from the sultan for the conquest of Chanderi and its adjoining territories and left Kara with 8,000 picked cavalry on February 26, 1296. The administration of Kara and Oudh was entrusted by him to his close associate Malik Alaul Mulk, uncle of Ziauddin Barani, the celebrated historian of the times to come. Alaul Mulk kept Delhi in ignorance about the real designs and movements of Alauddin Khalji by sending 'fabricated news'; Alauddin's younger brother Almas Beg[18] safeguarded his interests at the royal court in Delhi.

Alauddin actually marched to the neighbourhood of Chanderi, then took a sharp turn towards the south, crossed the Vindhyas and reached Ellichpur—'the northern outpost' of the Yadava kingdom. In order to lull the suspicions of the neighbouring hindu chieftains, he spread the rumour that he was a run-away prince from the sultanate, intending to seek refuge in the south. After allowing two days' rest to his troopers at Ellichpur, Alauddin thundered at the gates of Devagiri[19] to the great bewilderment of *raja* Ram Chandra Deva; it was a bolt from the blue for the latter. About this time, the best part of the maratha army had been taken farther south by the crown prince Singhana to settle some border dispute with a neighbouring state, a fact which seems to have been already known to Alauddin Khalji through his secret agents. Ram Chandra Deva shut himself up within the hill-fort,[20] giving a free hand to Alauddin Khalji to plunder the town and take its leading citizens as captives. Alauddin laid siege to the fort and gave out that he constituted only an advance guard of Delhi and that the sultan was on his way to Devagiri with 20,000 strong army. Totally nonplussed and dejected, Ram Chandra Deva sued for peace and the release of his citizens on payment of a huge ransom. Before the

18. He was also a son-in-law of Jalaluddin Khalji, and held the office of *amir i akhur*—'the master of the horse'.
19. On the way from Ellichpur to Devagiri, Kanhana, a vassal of *raja* Ram Chandra Deva, made an unsuccessful bid to stop the invader; his contingent included two brave ladies who charged the enemy like 'tigresses' and died fighting in the battlefield.
20. The fortress of Devagiri (mod. Daulatabad) it situated on an isloated cone-shaped hill 640 feet high. The steepness and height of the rock required a minimum of defences. Its walls, bastions, and a moat cut 50 feet deep into solid rock, made up for the little deficiencies left by nature. But for some time past, the Yadavas had felt too powerful to care for their own defence, so that at the time of Alauddin's invasion, the moat was lying dry and unprotected, and the garrison was short of provisions.
—K.T. Lal, *History of the Khaljis (1290-1320)*; Allahabad, 1950, pp. 52-53.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

transaction could be completed, Singhana rushed back from the far south with the maratha army; his father sent him a message that a deal had already been struck with the invader; nonetheless, Singhana challenged Alauddin Khalji to surrender the booty and vacate their kingdom. A daredevil Alauddin Khalji left his lieutenant Nusrat Khan with only one thousand horse to continue the siege of the fort and himself gave battle to the marathas at a short distance from Devagiri. After a day-long battle, the turks were heavily outnumbered and badly mauled; they were on the verge of collapse when Nusrat Khan, without seeking permission from Alauddin, raised the siege of the fort and jumped into the battle-field with his small contingent to the great relief of their colleagues. The marathas mistook them for the royal army of Delhi, lost courage and fled the field. Undaunted courage, better war strategy and good fortune turned the scales in favour of Alauddin who quickly returned to the siege of the fort and, within a couple of days, brought Ram Chandra Deva to his knees. The latter had to part with a far greater war indemnity than before and promised to pay the revenues of Ellichpur as tribute to Alauddin, who hastend back to Kara, laden with immense booty.[21]

On the receipt of information regarding Alauddin's expedition to Chanderi, Jalaluddin Khalji left Delhi with the royal army and was encamped in the neighbourhood of Gwalior when he heard of the real target of his nephew's enterprise and his crowning victory at Devagiri. He was 'greatly pleased' and 'to celebrate this success', 'gave entertainments and drank wine'.[22] Some of his wise counsellors, led by the outspoken Ahmad Chap,[23] advised the sultan to

21. Barani does not give the exact figures but Firishta states that it included 600 maunds of gold, 1,000 maunds of silver, seven maunds of pearls, two maunds of diamonds, rubies and other precious stones, and 4.000 pieces of silk-stuff besides horses, elephants and slaves,—*Firishta* (*Briggs*), *I*, p. 175.

22. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 150.

23. Barani puts the following words in the mouth of Ahmad Chap:

> Elephants and wealth when held in great abundance, are the cause of much strife. Whoever acquires them becomes so intoxicated that he does not know his hands from his feet. Alauddin is surrounded by many of the rebels and insurgents who supported Malik Chajju. He has gone into a foreign land without leave, has fought battles and won treasure. The wise have said 'Money and strife; strife and money'—that is, the two things are allied to each other...My opinion is that we should march with all haste towards Chanderi to meet Alauddin and intercept his return. When he finds the Sultan's army in the way, he must necessarily present all his spoils to the throne whether he likes it or not. The Sultan may then take the silver and gold, the jewels and pearls, the elephants and horses, and leave the other booty to him and his soldiers. His territories should also be increased, and he should be carried in honour to Delhi.
>
> *Ibid*, pp. 150-51.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

intercept Alauddin Khalji near Chanderi and secure the spoils before he reached Kara. To his misfortune, however, Jalaluddin did not heed to it, and returned to Delhi with the vain hope that 'whatever his son-in-law and nephew had captured, he would joyfully bring to him.[24]

On his way back, the chauhans of Asirgarh attempted to intercept Alauddin's train, laden heavily with booty, but were repulsed by Alauddin's archers; the victor reached Kara on June 3, 1296. His expedition to Devagiri is by far one of the most extraordinary exploits of medieval Indian history.[25]

Murder of Jalaluddin Khalji: The success of the expedition to Devagiri turned Alauddin's head; he did not want to part with the fabulous wealth acquired by his skill and at the risk of his own life. He evaded a visit to Delhi on various pretexts and through 'treacherous communications' persuaded the sultan to come to Kara and receive the booty. Blinded by the affection for his nephew, Jalaluddin disregarded the advice and protests of his courtiers and proceeded to Kara; he and his nobles travelled by boats while a small contingent of a thousand horse, commanded by Ahmad Chap, marched along the bank of the Yamuna. He reached Kara 'on the hither side of the Ganges' on July 20, 1296; it being the rainy season, 'the waters were out' and 'the Ganges was very high'. Alauddin's army was drawn in a battle-array on the other side of the Ganges between Kara and Manikpur. Through the connivance of the traitor Almas Beg, the aged sultan ordered his horsemen and bodyguards also to stay behind, 'whilst he, with two boats and a few personal attendants and friends, passed over to the other side', in the midst of Alauddin's army. Alauddin 'advanced to receive him, he and all his officers showing due respect'. He 'fell at the feet of the sultan' and the latter 'treating him as a son', hugged him, 'kissed his eyes and cheeks' and chided him for doubting his uncle's love. About this time, two of Alauddin's guards struck the sultan down with their swords and chopped off his head.[25] Barani records that:

> While the head of the murdered sovereign was yet dripping with blood, the ferocious conspirators brought the royal canopy and elevated it over the head of Alauddin. Casting

24. *ibid.*, p. 150.
25. Firishta opines that
> there is scarcely anything to be compared with this exploit, whether we regard the resolution in forming the plan, the boldness of its execution, or the great good fortune which attended its accomplishment. —(*Briggs*), I, p. 176.
26. For details refer to Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; pp. 151-56.

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> aside all shame, the perfidious and graceless wretches caused to be proclaimed king by men who rode about on elephants.[27]

Barani condemns this heinous crime in the most forceful terms. All those who were a party to it received befitting punishments, according to the contention of the author, at the hands of nature, sooner or later.[28]

An Estimate

Jalaluddin Khalji was the first liberal-minded and benevolent ruler among the autocratic turkish sultans of Delhi. A successful military general in his youth, and an experienced administrator, he ruled the people with moderation. By and large, he was a man of non-political temperament who did not aspire to be the sultan. Nature elevated him to the kindly office which made him all the more humble and generous in his treatment towards all the high and the low. He did not sit on Balban's royal throne, nor did he ever ride in the courtyard of Balban's palace; *albeit* his excessive mildness and humane approach to the state affairs hurt the pride of those who had brought about the Khalji revolution. Jalaluddin failed to fulfil their aspirations and having failed 'to play the king', fell in their estimation. No wonder, most of his associates and faithful followers rallied round the personality of his more ambitious and youthful nephew Alauddin Khalji, who was destined to lay the foundations of 'the planned imperialist economy' in place of 'the outmoded racial polity' of the mamluk turks.[29] In the words of a modern historian,

> Like the reformed Asoka, he (Jalaluddin) aimed at ruling by human love and faith, but if he paid for its failure nobly with

27. *ibid*; p. 155.
28. Barani writes:

> Although these villains were spared for a short time, and Alauddin for some years, still they were not forgotten (by nature) and their punishments were only suspended. At the end of three or four years, Ulugh Khan (Almas Beg, the younger brother of Alauddin), the deceiver, was gone, so was Nusrat Khan, the giver of the signal; so also was Zafar Khan, the breeder of the mischief, my uncle Alaul Mulk, *Kotwal*, and...and...The hell-bound Salim, who struck the first blow, was a year or two afterwards eaten up with leprosy. Ikhtiyaruddin, who cut off the head, very soon went mad, in his dying ravings cried that Sultan Jalaluddin stood over him with a naked sword, ready to cut off his head. Alaudd'n did not escape retribution for the blood of his patron. He shed more innocent blood than ever Pharaoh was guilty of. Fate at length placed a betrayer in his path, by whom his family was destroyed...and the retribution which fell upon it never had a parallel even in any infidel land...
>
> —*ibid*, pp. 155-56.

29. Habibullah in *Comp. HI*, V, p. 325.

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his own life, it was an indictment which mankind has since done little to expiate.[30]

Early Career and Accession

The original name of Alauddin Khalji was Ali Gurshap;[31] he was a nephew of Jalaluddin Khalji. He was born in *circa* 1266 A.D. and brought up by his uncle because of the untimely death of his father. He did not receive proper schooling but grew up to be a brilliant warrior who, unlike his uncle, proved to be extremely ambitious, aggressive and selfish by nature. He was married to a daughter of Jalaluddin Khalji.

Alauddin played an active part in the Khalji revolution. When Jalaluddin became the sultan, Alauddin was made *amir i tuzuk*—'the master of ceremonies', while his younger brother Almas Beg, who also happened to be a son-in-law of Jalaluddin, received the office of *amir i akhur*—'the master of horse (the royal stables)'. Alauddin gave proof of his organisational skill as a commander in the suppression of Malik Chhajju's revolt and received the governorship of Kara in 1291. His successful expedition to Bhilsa (1292) earned him the exalted office of *ariz i mumalik*—'the minister of war', and the additional charge of the *iqta* of Oudh.

Alauddin's family life was, however, not very happy. He had two wives,[32] one was the daughter of sultan Jalaluddin and the other, named Mahru, was a sister of Malik Sanjar.[33] Mahru was the favourite wife[34] of Alauddin while the sultan's daughter was neglected by him because of her haughty demeanour. He fell out with the princess when she attempted to dominate her husband and exhibited open jealousy and contempt[35] towards Mahru. *Malika i Jahan*, the chief queen of sultan Jalaluddin, was equally

30. *ibid.*
31. His father Shihabuddin Masaud, the elder brother of Jalaluddin Khalji, left behind four sons, two of whom, Alauddin and Almas Beg, rose to prominence.
32. Both of them seem to have been married by Alauddin Khalji long before the Khalji revolution of 1290.
33. A personal friend of Alauddin, later styled Alp Khan, who rose to prominence as one of the four most powerful and trustworthy military generals of Alauddin Khalji; his daughter was married, at a later stage to the crown Prince Khizer Khan.
34. She was made the chief queen (*Malika i Jahan*) by Alauddin Khalji in 1296 when he became the sultan; their son Khizer Khan became the heir apparent to the throne.
35. It is said that one day Alauddin and Mahru were enjoying a free time in the garden when Jalaluddin's daughter appeared on the scene; out of jealousy, she started beating Mahru with her shoe. It enraged Alauddin who assaulted her with the sword and injured her. The incident probably took place at Kara, soon after Alauddin had been posted there as governor. It was reported to the sultan but the latter did not take it seriously.

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aggressive; instead of bringing about reconciliation between the husband and the wife, she sided with her daughter and found fault with Alauddin. Barani states[36] that

> Alauddin was averse to bringing the disobedience of his wife before the sultan, and he could not brook the disgrace which would arise from his derogatory position being made public. It greatly distressed him...and he often consulted with his intimates at Kara about going out in the world to make a position for himself.

The estrangement of relations between Alauddin and the ladies of the royal household had very serious repercussions. Kara had already been a hotbed of intriguers. Malik Chhajju, who had raised a banner of revolt against Jalaluddin Khalji, had been sent to Multan; but many of his associate and military officers, who had taken part in the revolt, were imprisoned at Kara. Following in the footsteps of Jalaluddin, Alauddin set him free, and took some of them into his service. These disaffected persons began at once to suggest to Alauddin that 'it was quite possible to raise and equip a large force in Kara, and through Kara to obtain Delhi. Money only was needed; but for want of that, Malik Chhajju would have succeeded'.[37] Alauddin's successful expedition to Devagiri (1296 A.D.) made up this deficiency. His ambition soared high; and he hatched a conspiracy to usurp the throne, failing which, he planned to escape towards Bengal with his army and the treasure and try to found an independent kingdom there. As luck would have it, the unsuspecting sultan fell a victim to the treachery of his beloved nephews and sons-in-law—Alauddin and his younger brother Almas Beg, and facilitated the task of the latter. Of course, the plan to murder the sultan was not preconceived; the decision to commit this crime seems to have been taken by Alauddin on the spot when the unscrupulous nephew found the old monarch landing into Alauddin's armed forces unattended.

Alauddin was declared sultan of Delhi immediately after the murder of Jalaluddin at Kara on July 20, 1296. Malik Ahmad Chap rushed back to Delhi and held hurried consultations with the Jalali nobles and the *Malika i Jahan* for the future course of action. Arkali Khan, the second son of the deceased sultan and the heir apparent to the throne of Delhi was at Multan; his elder brother, *Khan i Khana*, had died in 1290 soon after the Khalji revolution. As Arkali Khan was not immediately available in the capital at that hour of crisis, *Malika i Jahan* committed a fatal

36. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 149.
37. *ibid.*, p. 140.

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mistake in declaring her third son Qadr Khan as the sultan, styled as Ruknuddin, and herself set up as his regent. It forthwith led to division among the Jalali nobles; Arkali Khan, on hearing of it, fell so much affronted by this lapse on the part of his mother that he stayed back at Multan and did not come to the defence of the capital. Meanwhile, Alauddin Khalji opened the chests of his treasures and won over the Jalali nobles and their soldiery by liberal distribution of gold and silver.[38]

Alauddin took three months to reach Delhi; by this time, he had under his command more than a *lakh* of the army. On the way to Delhi, he had literally been showering gold and silver over the heads of the people to win their support. He entered the capital on October 26, 1296 'in great pomp' and was acccorded reception by the entire populace amidst great rejoicings; the members of the Jalali family had already fled to Multan. He took his seat upon Balban's throne in the *daulat-khana-i-julus* and was formally crowned with the title *Abul Muzaffar Sultan Alaud Duniya wa Din Muhammad Shah Khalji*. He offered high offices to his friends and associates *albeit* many of the Jalali nobles were confirmed in their old assignments so much so that even the *wizarat*—'the office of the prime minister', continued to be held by the old incumbent Khwaja Khatir. Alauddin's younger brother Almas Khan became the premier noble of the state with the title *Ulugh Khan* while Malik Sanjar was styled *Alp Khan*. Malik Hazbaruddin, now, styled *Zafar Khan*, became the *ariz i mumalik*. Nusrat Khan was appointed *kotwal* of Delhi while Alaul Mulk received appointment as governor of Kara. All the soldiers were granted six months salary as a reward; the *ulema*, the *shaikhs* and other nobles and officials received grants of land and titles while all the visitors to the capital as well as its inhabitants received liberal gifts from the sultan. The public festivities at state expenses continued for weeks.[39] Barani concludes the accounts of Alauddin's accession to the throne with the remarks[40] that:

38. In the words of Barani,

> *Maliks* and *amirs* who were sent from Delhi to oppose the advancing forces (of Alauddin), came to Baran and joined Alauddin, for which they received twenty, thirty and some fifty *mans* of gold. All the soldiers who were under these noblemen received each three hundreds tankas, and the whole following of the late Jalaluddin was broken up.
>
> *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 159.

39. In the words of Barani, Alauddin—

> scattered so much gold about that the faithless people easily forgot the murder of the late sultan, and rejoiced over his accession...he had committed a deed unworthy of his religion and position, so he deemed it politic to deceive the people, and to cover his crime by scattering honours and gifts upon all classes of people.
>
> —*Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 161.

40. *ibid.*, pp., 157-58.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

the people were so deluded by the gold which they received that no one ever mentioned the horrible crime which the sultan had committed and the hope of gain left them no care for anything else.

Liquidation of the Jalali Family

Alauddin's first task after the occupation of Delhi was to settle his scores with the Jalali family, headed by Arkali Khan, the governor of Multan and Sind. Ulugh Khan (viz., Almas Beg, the younger brother of the sultan) and Zafar Khan were dispatched to Multan with 40,000 army. They laid siege to the fort of Multan and compelled its defenders to offer submission after two months' strenuous efforts. Arkali Khan, Qadr Khan (the ex-sultan Ruknuddin), Malik Ahmad Chap and Ulghu Khan (the mongol son-in-law of Jalaluddin Khalji) were taken captives and blinded. Arkali Khan, Qadr Khan and two sons of the former were handed over to the *kotwal* of Hansi who put them to death after some time. Malik Ahmad Chap, Ulghu Khan and the ex-*Malika i Jahan* were kept in confinement at Delhi in the custody of Nusrat Khan, and nothing was heard of them afterwards; obviously, they were all liquidated. Ulugh Khan was appointed governor of the *iqtas* of Multan and Sind. The lands and properties of all the ex-Jalali nobles and their favourites in those provinces were confiscated and all those who had collaborated with the Jalali princes were severely punished.

Alauddin as an Autocrat

His Theory of Kingship : Unperceived by his courtiers, the ex-colleagues and collaborators, Alauddin Khalji assumed a *volte face* in his attitude towards the nobility immediately after the conquest of Multan and Sind and the liquidation of the Jalali family. Once he felt secure on the throne, Alauddin, in a surprise move, laid his hands upon all the ex-Jalali nobles who had betrayed their old master on the receipt of rich rewards from him. Alauddin had immensely benefitted from their support a short while ago; nonetheless, he condemned their past treacherous conduct towards the Jalali family and declared them to be undependable and untrustworthy. Alauddin took back the excessive gold and silver which he had himself given to them, as a bribe so to say; deprived them of honours, blinded some and beheaded the others.[41] Alauddin took the next step, in this reversal of policy, towards his old associates and personal friends, then holding the high offices. Alaul Mulk was called to Delhi and made to surrender 'all the elephants and treasures' which Alauddin had left with him at Kara. Owing to his bulky physique, he was no longer thought fit for active service; he was asked to stay in the capital as its *kotwal* while Nusrat Khan who was instrumental

41. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*, pp. 162-63.

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in extracting a crore of *tankas* for the treasury, by levying fines and confiscations on the ex-Jalali nobles, was sent to Kara as its new governor. By his dictatorial commands and quick replacements of the high-ups, Alauddin established complete dominance over the nobility so that none of them might grow too powerful and influential or develop vested interests at any place or in any office. Before any of his ex-colleagues could pause to think of his bilateral relationship with the sultan, Alauddin Khalji had pulled himself far above their heads and assumed the most dictatorial and autocratic powers. For him, therefore, the revival of Balban's theory of divine rights of kingship was only a matter of formality. He declared himself to be the *Zili Ilahi*—'the shadow of God on Earth', and claimed divine powers and virtues for the sovereign who, according to him stood no comparison with the other human beings. He believed in the theory that 'kingship knows no kinship' which implied that all the inhabitants of his dominions were either his servants or his subjects. He regarded the king to be above the law of the land; rather his word was the law; this concept was in contradiction to the principles of Islamic theology on which the turkish state was originally founded in India.

Alauddin was a *Sunni Mussalman* who professed adherence to the faith and never disputed the injunctions of Islamic law; nevertheless, as a ruler he was the law unto himself. In his dialogues with *qazi* Mughisuddin of Bayana on the state policy, Alauddin once expressed his views on the subject thus:

> To prevent rebellion, in which thousands perish, I issue such orders as I conceive to be for the good of the State, and the benefit of the people. Men are heedless, disrespectful, and disobey my commands; I am then compelled to be severe to bring them into obedience. I do not know whether this is lawful or unlawful; whatever I think to be for the good of the State, or suitable for the emergency, that I decree.[42]

Alauddin's rhetorics on the state policy as given above can be understood better if we substitute 'him' for 'the State' and 'his self-interest' for 'the good of the State.' So far as his position as head of 'an Islamic state' was concerned, Alauddin continued to style himself *Yamin ul Khilafat Nasiri Amir ul Momnin*; *albeit* he never felt the necessity of invoking caliph's name to justify and strengthen his claim to sovereignty. He never applied for investiture by the caliph nor regarded the latter to be his 'political superior'; reference to the caliph in official records continued to be made simply to keep the tradition of caliphate theoretically alive.

42. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 188.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

The nobility (*aihal i shamshir*) and the *ulema* (*aihal i qalam*) wielded influence in the state affairs and exercised some check on the powers and functions of the mamluk sultans of Delhi; Alauddin Khalji sternly curbed their power and did not give them a free-hand in determining the state policy. He was a highly self-willed and autocratic ruler who struck terror in the hearts of his ministers, military generals and the ruling elite; therefore, none dared to give him any advice or contradict his views or orders. The nobles were kept firmly under his thumb by the sultan while the *ulema*, though kept in good humour, were never permitted to interfere in state politics. Of course, Alauddin did not antagonise the *mullas* and *shaikhs* through public criticism or ridicule. The muslim scholars, saints, *shaikhs* and the *mullas* received liberal stipends (*madad i muash*) and honours. All posts in the judicial and educational establishments were reserved for them; their chiefs were given a free hand in administering the educational institutions, courts, holy places, religious endowments and charitable funds. They also enjoyed sufficient freedom of action in tackling the socio-religious problems of the muslim community. At times Alauddin successfully exploited muslim fanaticism in his wars against the hindu chieftains and treatment of 'the zimmis'. Nevertheless, Alauddin Khalji was the first among the turkish sultans of Delhi who separated religion from the state politics and initiated what may be called a secular state policy, based on the principles of absolute despotism.[43] Barani states that when Alauddin

> became king, he came to the conclusion that polity and government are one thing, and the rules and decrees of (Islamic) law are another. Royal commands belong to the king, legal decrees rest upon the judgment of *qazis* and *muftis*. In accordance with this opinion, whatever affair of state came before him, he only looked to the public good, without considering whether his mode of dealing with it was lawful or unlawful. He never asked for legal opinions about political matters, and very few learned men visited him.[44]

Alauddin's long reign of twenty years provides us with only two instances when he had some discussion, at his own initiative, with two experts on Islamic theology—Alaul Mulk, the *kotwal* of Delhi and personal friend of the sultan, and Mughisuddin, the *qazi* of Bayana and one of the greatest theologians of his age. Of course, Alauddin did not annoy the *ulema* by challenging their right to have a say in the state affairs but subordinated them through

43. The successive sultans of Delhi, with the exception of Muhammad bin Tughluq, failed to pursue this course of action and the sultanate reverted to a theocracy once again.
44. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 183.

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liberal state patronage and tactfulness which, coupled with the exercise of his autocratic authority in general, cowed them down to abject obedience. Mughisuddin was treated as one of the ordinary amirs at the court and never accorded any special treatment by virtue of his being an expert in Islamic law. One day 'when efforts were being made for the increase of' taxes on the subjects, Alauddin told Mughisuddin that he 'had several questions to ask him and desired him to speak the plain truth'. It shook the *qazi* to the bones and he replied,

> The angel of my destiny (death) seems to be close at hand, since Your Majesty wishes to question me on matters of religion; if I speak the truth, you will be angry and kill me.

The sultan promised to spare his life but 'commanded him to answer in accordance with what he had read in books (Islamic law)'. The *qazi* began to quote at length the Islamic scriptures in reply to one of the queries pertaining to the treatment of hindus in an Islamic state. Alauddin 'smiled at' his answers and said,

> I do not understand any of the statements thou hast made; ——— I have taken my measures, and have made my subjects obedient, so that at my command, they are ready to creep into holes like mice.[45]

It clearly shows that Alauddin Khalji was an autocrat whose word was law, and whose theory of kingship had nothing to do with the Islamic principles.

Wild Aims of Alauddin Khalji : The usurpation of the throne by treachery and brute force, accompanied by the acquisition of fabulous wealth and the quick victories scored in Multan and Sind, turned Alauddin's head. His ambitions soared high; 'exalted with arrogance and presumption', he began to entertain 'fancies which had never occurred to any king before him'.[46] He began to talk of accomplishing a twofold project of founding a new religion, and launching a campaign for the world-conquest like Alexander the Great. He argued that just as the Prophet Muhammad had four companions—Abu Bakr, Umar, Usman and Ali, he had his four brilliant lieutenants in the persons of Ulugh Khan, Zafar Khan, Nusrat Khan and Alp Khan. He declared:

> I can, with the help of these four friends, establish a new religion and creed; and the swords of my friends, will bring all

45. *ibid.*, p. 185.
46. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*, pp. 168-71.

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men to adopt. Through this religion, my name and that of my friends will remain among men to the last day like the names of the Prophet and his friends.[47]

Alauddin used to unfold his second project as follows:

My wish is to place Delhi in charge of a vice-regent, and then I will go out myself into the world, like Alexander, in pursuit of conquest, and subdue the whole habitable world.[48]

Over-elated with his initial victories, Alauddin caused himself to be styled 'the Second Alexander' (*Sikander i Sani*) in the *khutba* and on his coins. It was Alaul Mulk who brought the sultan to his senses by pointing out the impracticability of his wild aims. At a great personal risk, he made bold to tell him that religion and the creeds should never be made the subject of discussions by him as these were 'the concerns of the prophets, not the business of kings'. He emphasised that the 'prophetic office has never appertained to kings, and never will, so long as the world lasts, although some prophets have discharged the functions of royalty'.[49] As regards his plan 'to bring the whole world under his sway', Alaul Mulk made the sultan realise that there were so many kingdoms and regions in India which were not yet under his control, the sultanate faced grave danger from the mongols, and there was no minister like Aristotle to manage the affairs of the state during his long absence on a world campaign.[50] Alaul Mulk, therefore, advised the sultan to pay wholehearted attention to the state affairs and refrain from indulgence in excessive drinking and the other sensual pleasures. Alauddin was deeply impressed by his exposition; he richly rewarded the scholar and promised to follow his wise counsel. According to Barani, this dialogue took place in the presence of all the four great *khans* (Ulugh Khan, Zafar Khan, Nusrat Khan and Alp Khan), sometime before the third mongol invasion of India during the reign of Alauddin, led by Qutlugh Khwaja (1299 A.D.), and was 'greatly praised by all the *wazirs* and wise men of the city'.[51] The truth of his advice dawned upon Alauddin Khalji almost instantaneously. The mongol invasions which took place in quick succession (1297, 1298 and 1299) soon after he ascended the throne, threatened the very existence of the sultanate of Delhi, and Alauddin was hard-pressed to safeguard his dominions. His attempt to bring the unconquered parts of the country under his control was stubbornly

47. *ibid.*, p. 169.
48. *ibid.*
49. *ibid.*, p. 170.
50. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*, p. 170.
51. *ibid.*, p. 171.

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resisted by the hindu chieftains. The siege of Ranthambhor (1300-01) which lasted many months and 'taxed all his energies,' made him bitterly conscious of the sad reality that he had been 'living in a fool's paradise' when he talked of 'conquering the world in the role of Alexander.'[52] Within four years of his period of rule, as many as four attempts were made on his personal life by his rebellious kinsmen and other disaffected elements. These developments took the wind out of his wild plans, and he began to distrust those very nobles, with the assistance of whom he intended to accomplish those schemes. Alauddin, therefore, gave up the idea of founding 'a new religion' and likewise of 'world conquest'; instead, he adopted a down-to-earth policy which comprised the defence of the sultanate from the mongol menace, strengthening of his armed forces and enrichment of the royal treasury on which the very stability of the state was based, curtailment of the powers of the nobles and extension of his imperial sway over the unsubdued parts of India. He achieved ample success in the fulfilment of all these objectives.

Alauddin's Imperialism: As mentioned earlier, Alauddin had secured the provinces (*itqas*) of Multan and Sind from the Jalali family (1296-97) immediately after his coronation at Delhi; these were conquered by the armies led by his younger brother Ulugh Khan and Zafar Khan. Ulugh Khan was appointed governor of the two provinces. After successfully repulsing the first mongol attack on his dominions (1297 A.D.), Alauddin planned the conquest of the rich and fertile region of Gujarat. It was then ruled by rai Karan Deva Baghela[53] with his capital at Anhilwara.[54] Early in 1299, Alauddin ordered a two-pronged attack on Gujarat; Ulugh Khan led his forces from Sind and Nusrat Khan marched from Delhi. The former reduced Jaisalmer and made a junction with the army of Delhi in the neighbourhood of Delhi. The royal army avoided a head-on collision with the rajputs of Chittor, and instead marched upon Gujarat in a surprise move. Karan Deva was taken unawares; he fled to the south and took shelter with Ram Chandra Deva, the ruler of Devagiri. Anhilwara was occupied without a fight, and sacked; Rai Karan's treasure and many women, including his chief queen Kamla Devi, fell into the hands of the invaders. The temple of Somnath,[55] the sea-port of Cambay (Khambayat) and many other towns were put to plunder by the conquerors; thousands of people of both sexes were enslaved. The province of Gujarat

52. Stanley Lane-Pool, *Medieval India Under Mohammedan Rule* (A.D. *712-1764*); indian reprint, Universal, 1963, p. 83.
53. The Chalukya or Solanki dynasty of Gujarat became extinct in 1242 A.D. on the death of its last ruler Bhim Deva II who left no male heir to succeed him. It was replaced by the Baghela (Vaghela) rajputs who were their kinsmen.
54. Modern Patan; *Nahravala* of the muslim chroniders.
55. The temple of Somnath which had been rebuilt by Kumarpala (1143-74) was again demolished.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

with its rich harbours of international fame fell into the hands of Alauddin like a ripe fruit full of honey; Alp Khan was appointed its governor.

The conquest of Gujarat is memorable for the emergence of two historic personalities of Alauddin's reign. The sultan was captivated by the beauty and royal dignity of *rani* Kamla Devi whom he married with full honour and made his cheif queen (*malika i jahan*) soon afterwards. Alauddin's second great find was a very handsome hindu turned muslim eunuch, named Kafur;[56] whom Nusrat Khan had acquired at Cambay from a muslim merchant (*khwaja*); he rose to be abrilliant military general and the *malik naib* of Alauddin Khalji in his later life.

On their return march from Gujarat to Delhi, the victorious generals demanded a fifth of the spoils from the soldiers as state's share and adopted harsh measures to extract the valuables hidden by the latter in their personal baggage. It led to a mutiny by a few thousand 'new *mussalmans*'—the mongol converts, which was crushed by the generals with an iron hand. It is said that:

> when the report of this outbreak reached Delhi, the crafty cruelty which had taken possession of Alauddin, induced him to order that the wives and children of all the mutineers, high and low, should be cast into prison. This was the beginning of the practice of seizing women and children for the faults of men. Upto this time, no hand had ever been laid upon wives and children on account of men's misdeeds.[57]

Barani states that a brother of Nusrat Khan had been killed by the mutineers; and, 'in revenge', Nusrat Khan, then appointed as *wazir* at Delhi for a shortwhile, following in the footsteps of the sultan, committed 'a more glaring act of tyranny' by ordering

> the wives of the assassins to be dishonoured and exposed to most disgraceful treatment; he then handed them over to vile persons to make common strumpets of them. The children he caused to be cut to pieces on the heads of their mothers. Outrages like this are practised in no religion or creed. These and similar acts of his filled the people of Delhi with amazement and dismay, and every bosom trembled.[58]

56. Malik Kafur has been called *hazardinari* by the muslim chroniclers; it is however, not clear whether Nusrat Khan obtained him from the muslim merchant of Cambay for a consideration or the merchant had, earlier, purchased him for one thousand *dinars* from elsewhere.
57. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 164.
58. *ibid*, p. 165.

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The easy conquest of Gujarat intoxicated Alauddin Khalji with power and pride. It increased the prosperity of the sultanate through maritime trade and commerce and enhanced the reputation of Alauddin throughout the muslim world. After this victory, he launched a full-fledged campaign of imperial conquests with the object of bringing the whole of the Indian subcontinent under his control. *Like chakravartin* monarchs of ancient era, Alauddin aspired to become the undisputed lord paramount of India. Having envisaged an imperial policy, he did not need any other plausible reason or excuse to invade the various hindu states of the subcontinent; he carried on ruthless and unprovoked wars against them and, ultimately, transformed the kingdom of Delhi into a mighty Indian empire.

In the pursuit of his imperial policy, Alauddin Khaiji had first to reckon with the powerful rajput states of Ranthambhor and Chittor. With the conquest of Gujarat, Rajputana was surrounded on three sides by the territories of the Delhi sultanate and Alauddin's task seemed to have become comparatively easier. Ranthambhor was then ruled by *rana* Hamir Deva, a descendant of Prithvi Raj III Chauhan. The fort had been conquered first by Qutubuddin Aibek and then by Iltutmish; it was again lost to the chauhan rajputs after the death of Iltutmish. In 1291, Jalaluddin had made an abortive attempt to conquer it. Alauddin Khalji ordered the victors of Gujarat, Ulugh Khan and Nusrat Khan, to measure their swords with the chauhans of Ranthambhor in 1300; the plausible excuse for the attack was that Hamir Deva had given shelter to some mongol fugitives who had revolted during the Gujarat campaign. The royal army laid siege to the fort which was gallantly defended by the rajputs. Nusrat Khan lost his life while organising the siege and the turkish army was routed by the rajputs. It compelled Alauddin to take the field in person. The siege lasted almost a year and the fort was, ultimately, taken through the treachery of Ranmal, the minister of Hamir Deva, who was won over by the sultan with the promise of gold and high office. The rajputs performed *jauhar*; the rajput ladies saved their honour by throwing themselves into fire while the males led by Hamir Deva died to a man in their hand to hand fight with besiegers.[59] After his victory, Alauddin ordered Ranmal and his accomplices to be put to death for having betrayed their own people.

Alauddin Khalji had to face revolts from three different quarters during the siege of Ranthambhor (1300-01). On his way to Ranthambhor, Akat Khan, a nephew of the sultan, made an attemot on his life; Alauddin was struck down by the assassin but

59. One night the Rai lit a fire at the top of the hill, and threw his women and family into the flames; they sacrificed their lives in despair—this fort (Ranthambhor) was taken by the slaughter...—Amir Khusrau, *Khazain ul Futuh*; *E&D*, III, p. 75.

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saved by his slave attendants by their presence of mind and sheer good luck. While the siege of Ranthambhor was going on, Umar Khan and Mangu Khan, Alauddin's sister's son, and governors of Oudh and Badaun respectively, raised the banner of revolt but were defeated and taken captives by the loyalists. Yet another revolt was engineered in Delhi by one Haji Maula, a slave of *amir ul umara* Fakhruddin, the late *kotwal* of the capital. Ulugh Khan had to be sent to Delhi to suppress the revolt and restore law and order; deterrent punishments were given to the rebels and their families.

The conquest of Ranthambhor, though hard-earned, gave an overwhelming confidence to Alauddin Khalji that none of the hindu kingdoms, however strong, were invincible, when dealt with one by one. What the rajputs of the neighbouring states, including that of Chittor, had been doing when the chauhans of Ranthambhor were engaged in life and death struggle against 'the armies of Islam'? No other rajput chief came to the rescue of Hamir Deva during a year-long siege of his capital by the enemy; instead, he was confronted, in that hour of trial, with defection and treachery on the part of his own close associates. The rajputs as a class displayed utter lack of the feelings of collective security and self-defence; their clannish rivalries and narrow regional loyalties stood in their way of concerted action against the common enemy; as a result they crumbled to dust and were defeated one by one by the imperial armies of Alauddin Khalji.[60]

In January 1303, 'the loud drums proclaimed the royal march from Delhi, undertaken with a view to the capture of Chittor',[61] the capital of Mewar, by far the most powerful state of Rajputana at that time. Its younger ruler Ratna Singh had ascended the throne in 1301 on the death of his father Samar Singh; he belonged to the guhilot or guhila clan of the rajputs who had held their sway in Mewar since the eighth century. They had successfully withstood the invasions of the muslims ever since the conquest of Sind by the arabs. Ratan Singh's grandfather *rana* Jaitra Singh (1213-33) had repulsed an attack from Iltutmish. It is said that one of the declared objectives of Alauddin Khalji in invading

60. Amir Khusrau's comment on the fall of Chittor (1303) is significant; he says:

> Praise be to God that he (Alauddin Khalji) so ordered the massacre of all the chiefs of hindus out of the pale of Islam, by his infidel-smiting sword, that if in this time, it should by chance happen that a schismatic should claim his right, the pure *Sunnis* would swear in the name of this Khalifa of God (Alauddin Khalji), that heterodoxy has no rights,
>
> *Khazain ul Futuh*; *E&D*, III. p. 77.

61. *ibid.* The poet laureate had accompanied the sultan, on his expedition to Chittor; he accordingly, gives in the *Khazain ul Futuh*, a graphic description of the fort of Chittor, its siege and conquest by the imperial army, and the aftermath of the occupation of the fort.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Chittor was to acquire Padmini, the peerless queen of *rana* Ratna Singh. The siege lasted about eight months and, ultimately, the sultan resorted to a stratagem in order to achieve success. The *rana* was taken captive by Alauddin through treachery but the rajputs, under the youthful leadership of Gora and Badal, liberated him from his clutches.[62] It was followed by a bloody clash of arms between the rival parties, resulting in the collapse of the rajput resistance: Ratan Singh died fighting in the battle-field while *rani* Padmini burnt herself along with the other rajput ladies on the funeral pyre.[63] Alauddin was deeply incensed by the stubborn fight put up by the rajputs; after the occupation of the fort, he ordered general massacre of the popluace of Chittor; and, as a result, 30,000 rajput men, women and children were put to the sword in cold blood in a single day.[64] Alauddin appointed his eldest son Khizer Khan, then a young lad of seven or eight, to be the governor of Chittor, and the town was renamed, after the prince, as Khizerabad. It was here that Khizer Khan was declared heir apparent to the throne of Delhi. The fort was heavily garrisoned by the imperial troops led by competent military generals who carried on the administration on behalf of the prince, *albeit* the rajputs of Mewar did not reconcile themselves to the loss of their independence; they retreated to the hills and carried on freedom struggle against the forces of occupation through guerilla warfare. Khizer abandoned the charge of Chittor in 1311, which was entrusted to a puppet rajput noble Maldeo, a kinsman of Ratan Singh. The rajputs of Mewar did not recognise him to be their ruler, and he was expelled by Hamir, a son of *rana* Ratan Singh, in 1318. Mewar thus became independent of Delhi within two years of Alauddin's death.

62. The Padmini episode as given by Malik Muhammad Jayasi in his epic, *Padmavat*, composed in 1540 A.D. seems to be based on historical truth. According to Jayasi, the lustful Alauddin promised to raise the siege of Chittor if the *rana* gave him a glimpse of his illustrious queen. The *rana* obliged him; Alauddin was admitted into the fort and Padmini was shown to him in a standing posture from behind a glass screen. When the *rana* and the nobles came out of the fort to see off the sultan, they were taken captives by the muslim soldiers. Thereafter, Alauddin demanded the hand of Padmini as a price for the liberation of *rana* Ratan Singh. The latter was, however, rescued by the rajputs through a clever monoeuvre.

63. J. Tod, on the testimony of Jayasi, describes the scene thus:

> The fire of *jauhar* was lighted in a subterranean cavern, which still exists, and the Rajput ladies led by Padmini, jumped into the flames...The fair Padmini closed the throng which was augmented by whatever of female beauty or youth could be tainted by Tartar lust. They were conveyed to the cavern and the opening closed upon them, leaving them to find security from dishonour in the devouring element.—*Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*; revised by W. Crooke; 3 vols., London, 1920, I, p. 311.

64. Amir Khusrau, *Khazain ul Futuh*; *op. cit*; p. 77.

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The conquest of Ranthambhor and Chittor broke the backbone of the rajput power; it had an over-all demoralising effect upon the other hindu rulers of Rajputana and central India. In 1305, Alauddin sent Ainul Mulk, Multani, at the head of 10,000 horses, for the conquest of Malwa. Its ruler Mahlak Deva and his brother and minister Koka Pradhan failed to check the advance of the imperial army and perished in the struggle. All the important towns of Malwa, including Ujjain, Dhar, Mandu and Chanderi, were acquired by Ainul Mulk who received governorship of the conquered territories from the sultan. In 1308, Alauddin conquered Sevana, a fortress, situated about a hundred miles from Delhi in the heart of a thick forest; its ruler Shitaldeva, a barmar rajput, was killed and his principality declared annexed to the sultanate. Kamaluddin Gurg was appointed *itqadar* of Sevana.

The last important expedition of Alauddin Khalji, in northern India, was directed against Jalor. Its chauhan ruler Kanhardeva had accepted the suzerainty of Delhi in 1304 but Alauddin was very unhappy with his arrogant conduct; he wanted to annex the principality by abolishing the rajput ruling house. Therefore, in 1311, he sent an army for the conquest of Jalor under the command of Malik Shahin, an illegitimate son of the sultan from a slave girl, Gul Bahisht. The latter also accompanied her son to the war-front in joint command of the royal army. Gul Bahisht expired of fever during the campaign while her son Shahin died fighting the rajputs. The fort was ultimately conquered by Kamaluddin Gurg who was promoted governor of Jalor by the sultan. Maldeo, who was made a puppet ruler of Chittor by Alauddin in 1311, was a brother of *raja* Kanhardeva of Jalor, and was related to the ruling family of Chittor. There is reason to believe that Maldeo had betrayed his own family at Jalor, and was related to the ruling family of Chittor. There is reason to believe that Maldeo had betrayed his own family at Jalor and helped the imperial forces in the occupation of the fort; he, therefore, received the kingdom of Chittor as a price for this treacherous role. Alauddin Khalji became the undisputed imperial ruler of the whole of northern India by the year 1311.

Alauddin's conquest of Rajputana did not, however, prove conclusive or permanent. The peculiar topography of Rajputana, comprising a vast stretch of desert, interspersed with forests and dry hills, was by itself a great hindrance in the way of conquest, and Alauddin's campaigns cost him very heavily in men and material with no parallel monetary or material compensation. Besides, the brave rajputs, when brought to bay within their own homeland, fought stubbornly and with desperation because they held their personal liberty above everything else. Alauddin Khalji committed a grave mistake when he attempted to subjugate them by brute force. The cruel and very often humiliating treatment

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meted out by him towards the defeated rajput chiefs and soldiers, and the utter disregard of their religious sentiments antagonised the rajput masses as a whole. The latter refused to reconcile themselves to the loss of their independence and liquidation of their clannish ruling houses. They started a counter-offensive against the victors; the struggle for independence of Chittor was launched, by the populace of Mewar, the very moment their capital fell into the hands of Alauddin's forces. Had Alauddin tried to win over the rajput public by the adoption of conciliatory measures as Akbar did later on, the rajputs might have acknowledged his overlordship after their debacle at Ranthambhor and Chittor. Alauddin failed, however, to win the confidence and cooperation of the people as a benevolent lord paramount. Therefore, his conquest of Rajputana, for the most part, lay on quicksands; the territories slipped out of the control of Delhi sultanate soon after the death of Alauddin Khalji. The misfortune of the rajputs was that they had learnt nothing and forgotten everything from their repeated failures in the long struggle against the turks ever since the days of Mohammad Ghori. They possessed the same narrow and parochial outlook as ever before and failed to forge a united front against their common foe. Their isolated efforts to regain independence yielded some fruit at heavy costs to them, *albeit* the lack of coordination reduced the military efforts of the various rajput clans to an exercise in futility in the long run.

Conquest of the Deccan (1307-13): The fabulous wealth acquired from the plunder of Devagiri had made Alauddin the sultan of Delhi; the conquest of the Deccan, therefore, constituted but an indispensable part of his imperial policy. Devagiri to Alauddin was a gateway to the treasure-trove of the legendary 'forty thieves' and the sultan was ever eager to possess it by playing the role of *Ali Baba*. In the opinion of the author, it was Alauddin's dream of possessing the Deccan which turned that ambitious and adventurous youth into a great imperialist, and the conquest of Rajputana and Central India simply enabled him to bridge the gulf between Delhi and the Vindhyas. The conquest of the Deccan was foremost in his mind ever since he secured the crown. Therefore, while the conquest of northern India was progressing satisfactorily, Alauddin was in touch with all the developments that had been taking place in the south. Long before he launched a full-fledged campaign for the conquest of the Deccan, he had educated himself with the knowledge of its topography, ascertained the routes leading to the principal towns and acquired intelligence about the military prowess and treasures of the hindu adversaries who sat on the thrones of the southern kingdoms. Besides Ram Chandra Deva, the Yadava ruler of Devagiri (mod. Maharashtra), there were three other prominent kings of the south—Pratap Rudra Deva II of the Kakatiya dynasty had his headquarters at Warrangal (Telengana), Vir Ballala III of the Hoysalas at Dwarsamudra, and Kulashekhara Pandya of the

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far south at Madura. These rulers, like the rajput chieftains of northern India, did not look eye to eye with each other. They were devoid of a good neighbourly sense and constantly engaged themselves in mutual feuds and self-destructive fratricidal wars. It was, therefore, not very difficult to knock them down one by one. After the conquest of Ranthambhor (1301 A.D.), Ulugh Khan prepared an expedition for the conquest of Telengana and the Ma'bar but, due to his untimely death, the plan was given up.[65] In 1303, while Alauddin himself led an attack on Chittor, he ordered an army from Kara to march upon Telengana through Bengal and Orissa. The latter expedition proved, however, a failure; the army was probably defeated by the forces of Warrangal, that is why the muslim chroniclers have either omitted it or made only a casual reference to it. By the year 1305, Rajputana and Malwa had been conquered and all the routes leading to the south secured by Delhi ; the mongol invasions had been beaten off with a firm hand. Alauddin's 4,75,000 well-equipped standing army had to be usefully employed if it was to be kept under effective control. A wholesale invasion of the Deccan, therefore, lay in the logic of history. A few immediate considerations helped in the materialisation of the Deccan campaigns in 1306-07. Alauddin's extensive economic reforms, the vast expansion of the administration and the practice of paying salaries in cash to the soldiers as well as the bureaucracy increased the demand for gold and silver ; the desire to secure the precious metals from the south, therefore, became a dire necessity to replenish the state treasury and lubricate the war machine. To all these factors were added a couple of plausible excuses. Ram Chandra Deva had failed to send the tribute to Alauddin Khalji as per terms of the agreement made in 1296. He had, instead, given shelter to Karan Deva, the fugitive ruler of Gujarat, who was put up in Ellichpur—the territory which was claimed by Alauddin Khalji to be his own by virtue of the old agreement. Moreover, Kamla Devi, the ex-queen of Karan Deva, now the *malika i jahan* of Alauddin, had expressed the desire to secure her daughter Dewal Rani (or Devi) from her ex-husband. Dewal Rani was an infant of about six months when Gujarat was invaded by Alauddin's armies in 1297; she had perchance been saved and carried by her father to the south.

Alauddin Khalji called back surplus contingents of soldiers from the northwestern frontier and constituted them into 'an army of the Deccan under the command of Malik Kafur who had by then come to occupy the exalted office of the *malik naib*—'the deputy sultan'. He was destined to conquer the whole of south India under the direction and control of Alauddin Khalji. He led an attack, in 1307, on Devagiri with 30,000 soldiers ; he was assisted in this enterprise, by Ainul Mulk and Alp Khan, the governors of

65. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*, p. 179.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Malwa and Gujarat respectively. Karan Deva was defeated and turned out of Ellichpur ; his daughter Dewal Rani fell into the hands of Alp Khan's soldiers near the Ellora caves.[66] She was taken to Delhi where she was married to Khizer Khan, the crown prince, after a few years. Ram Chandra Deva suffered a defeat and sued for peace. He, with his wives and children, was sent to the imperial court at Delhi to offer personal submission to the sultan. Alauddin Khaljî accorded him an exceptionally generous treatment ; the latter gave one of his daughters in marriage[66] to the sultan and stayed at the capital as a royal guest for about six months. A number of hindu princesses were taken by the sultans of Delhi as their queens but this is an exceptional case in which a royal marriage took place with the full consent of both the parties. Ram Chandra Deva was treated by the sultan as his father-in-law in the right spirit. He received a personal estate and one lakh gold coins as a gift, as well as the title of *Rai Rayan* (king of kings) from Alauddin. According to Barani, 'the *Rai* was, ever afterwards, obedient; and sent his tribute regularly as long as he lived'.[68] He collaborated wholeheartedly with the imperial armies in the conquest of south India. The matrimonial relationships established between the ruling houses

66. Alp Khan, the father-in-law and maternal uncle of Khizer Khan, the eldest son of Alauddin Khalji, was sent in pursuit of Rai Karan Deva who had fled from Ellichpur. Unable to find him, Alp Khan encamped on the bank of a stream to give rest to his tired soldiers. A party of three to four hundred soldiers, without seeking permission from him, slipped out of the camp to have a look at the Ellora caves which were situated at a distance of a few miles. There they encountered a small maratha army which was promptly engaged and routed. It turned out to be an escort of the princess Dewal Rani who was being taken to Devagiri where she was to be married to Singhanadeva, the heir apparent to the throne. The escort was led by Bhillam, the younger brother of Singhanadeva. In the scuffle that followed, Dewal Rani's horse was wounded; she fell on the ground and was deserted by her guards. She might have fallen a victim to the caprice of the victors but one of her female attendants shouted at them and disclosed the identity of the princess. Thereupon, she was conducted 'with great care and respect' to their commander Alp Khan who 'having obtained his prize, was exceedingly rejoiced; 'he prosecuted his conquests no further' and hastened to Delhi with Dewal Rani. The *malika i jahan* was extremely pleased to be reunited with her daughter; she b stowed rich presents and honours upon Alp Khan,

—Refer to Firishta (Briggs), I, p. 210.

It made Alp Kban a favourite of the chief queen; he, subsequently, became the ring leader of a court clique which was opposed to the rising power of Malik Kafur.

67. Her son Shihabuddin Umar was nominated by the ailing sultan to succeed him to the throne, just before his death in 1316; Khizer Khan, the crown prince, was imprisoned at Gwalior by Malik Kafur, apparently with the consent of the sultan,

68. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 201,

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

of Delhi and Devagiri crossed the religious barriers ; Ram Chandra Deva became a part and parcel of the imperial power of India and rendered maximum assistance to Alauddin Khalji in the expansion of his imperial sway over the south. According to the critics who adopt partisan or communal approach, this relationship is interpreted differently. It is held that Alauddin's policy towards Ram Chandra Deva was based on political expediency ; as a clever politician and diplomat, Alauddin won over the loyalty of the Yadava chief and then used him as a tool in the fulfilment of his aggressive designs. According to some critics, Ram Chandra Deva was a coward ruler who compromised his independence, honour and self-respect in order to preserve his throne and the other material gains. Not only this ; having disgraced himself, he shamelessly helped the aggressors in trampling the whole of southern India under their heels. Ram Chandra Deva let down his own people, disgraced his religion and did incalculable harm to his own society and culture, of which he was expected to champion the cause. His cowardly conduct had a highly demoralising effect on the hindus of south India, in general, and their rulers, in particular.

In November 1309, Malik Kafur, accompanied by the *ariz i mumalik* and quite a few distinguished military generals, led an army which, according to one estimate, comprised a hundred thousand soldiers, for the conquest of Warrangal. Being the 'deputy sultan' (*malik naib*), Kafur was provided with a red canopy[69] and unquestionable supremacy and power to control over the other nobles. In the light of the extraordinary arrangements made and precautions taken by Alauddin Khalji for the subjugation of Telengana, we can gauge the military prowess and reputation of Rai Pratap Rudra Deva[70] II of Warrangal, who had stood his ground in the face of the first imperial attack. Alauddin did not underrate the strength of the enemy nor did he expect a sure victory for his army ; that is why he advised Malik Kafur not to 'press the raj too hard'. Kafur was expected to make a settlement with the ruler of Telengana without much loss of time 'and retire, without pushing matters too far, lest Rai Laddar Deo (Pratap Rudra Deva II) should get the better of him.'[71] It would be enough 'if the Rai consented to surrender his treasure and jewels, elephants and horses, and also to send treasure and elephants in the following year (not years)'.[72] The sultan further

69. Alauddin Khalji used a black canopy and the black pavilion for holding the imperial court; the red canopy was normally reserved for the princes of the royal blood.

70. Rai Laddar Deo of the muslim chroniclers; he was a kinsman of the Yadavas of Devagiri, his maternal grandmother Rudrambha Devi was a Yadava princess.

71. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 201.

72. *ibid.*

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warned the *malik naib* that in case he failed to achieve even this limited objective he should 'for the sake of his own name and fame' persuade the Rai, through diplomacy or force, to pay a visit to Delhi. Malik Kafur was to maintain firm control over the army *albeit* he was not to annoy the soldiery by his harsh treatment or by being 'severe in exacting the fifth of the spoils'.[73]

The imperial army marched through Devagiri ; Ram Chandra Deva rendered every type of assistance to it. He entertained Malik Kafur and other nobles with great hospitality, provided fodder for the animals and provisions for the soldiers. While the army was marching through his territories, he remained continuously in attendance upon Malik Kafur and met with all the commissariat requirements of the invader ; he ordered his merchants to set up bazars all along the route of the army 'with strict instructions to sell everything according to the sultan's established prices in his own dominions.'[74] Ram Chandra Deva deputed his scouts to guide the imperial army en route to Warrangal.

As soon as Malik Kafur reached the frontiers of Telengana, he issued orders to lay waste the country with fire and sword. According to Firishta, 'this confounded the inhabitants who had never injured their wanton enemies'.[75] The invaders met with resistance at the fort of Sirpur manned by a small contingent of the hindu soldiers. All of its defenders died in action while their ladies, along with their children, perished in the self-lit fire of *jauhar*. Most of the hindu nobles (*rawats*) of Telengana, instead of organising resistance to the invaders, from the countryside, fled to Warrangal and, apparently, augmented the forces of their chief, Ram Chandra Deva fought a defensive war from within the massive fort of Warrangal with double wall and ditches, which was promptly besieged by the imperial army. Some of the *rawats*, who were left outside the fort, rendered a better service to their master ; they cut off the supple line of the invaders and actually disrupted the imperial postal services so much so that for about six weeks, the sultan did not receive any news from the war front.[76] The hindu guerillas harassed the besiegers

73. *ibid.*

74. Firishta (Briggs), I, p. 212.

75. *ibid.*

76. Alauddin Khalji had developed a highly efficient system of postal services throughout his dominions. He employed elaborate means of communication to keep himself in touch with the imperial armies on the war fronts, particularly. Barani states that:

> It was the practice of the Sultan (Alauddin), when he sent an army on an expedition, to establish posts on the road, wherever posts could be maintained, beginning from Tilpat, which is the first stage. At every post, relays of horses were stationed, and at every half or quarter *kos* runners were posted, and in every town or place where horses were posted, officers and report writers were appointed. Every

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by launching night attacks on them ; it necessitated the erection of an extensive *kath-ghar*—a wooden defensive wall all around the imperial camp for protection. After a brief but deadly struggle, the imperial army captured the outer fort of Warrangal made of mud walls, squeezing the besieged garrison within the stone walls of the inner fort. Hardpressed, the rai sued for peace and felt great relief when he came to know that the invaders could be bought off. He parted with 100 elephants,[77] 7,000 horses and immense treasure of gold, silver and jewels of incalculable value ; it included the famous *jauhar*— later called *Koh i Noor*, 'unparalleled in the whole world'.[78] The rai did not meet Malik Kafur *albeit* he sent his man-size statue made of gold, with a golden chain round its neck in acknowledgement of his submission; he also promised in writing to send the annual tribute to the imperial court regularly. Laden with booty, Malik Kafur returnd to Delhi on June 11, 1310 to the great delight of Alauddin Khalji.[79]

Flushed with the joy of an easy victory at Warrangal, Alauddin Khalji became impatient to spread his imperial sway over the whole of the southern peninsula without much loss of time. Malik Kafur was even more enthusiastic than his master for the enterprising campaign; within four months of his return from Warrangal. he was ready for his third expedition to the south. The trigger-happy soldiers vied with one another in getting themselves listed in 'the army of Islam' for *jehad* against the infidels; the memories of the times of Mahmud of Ghazni were revived. The terms like *Islam* and *jehad* were, however, used in a most casual manner; as a matter of fact everyone, from the sultan to the rank and file, was tempted only by the glamour of loot and plunder. The expedition was originally directed against the kingdom of Dwarsamudra but only the sultan set the guidelines of the campaign; Malik Kafur was allowed ample discretion to execute it in any way he thought fit. The royal standards, accompanied by Malik Kafur with his red canopy, moved out of the capital in early November

> day, or every two or three days, news used to come to the sultan reporting the progress of the army, and intelligence of the health of the sovereign was carried to the army. False news was thus prevented from being circulated in the city or in the army. The securing of accurate intelligence from the court on one side and the army on the other, was a great benefit.
>
> —*Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 203.

77. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 203.

> Firishta, on the other hand, mentions, that Kafur brought 300 elephants to Delhi from the campaign (Briggs, 1, p. 213); may be, the rai had surrendered only 100 elephants at Warrangal as a part of the treaty while the other 200 elephants fell into the hands of the invaders during the course of the campaign.

78. Firishta, *op. cit.*

79. According to Firishta, Malik Kafur

> despatched before him the account of his victories which was read from the pulpit, and public rejoicings were ordered. On his approach

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 Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

1310, and a review of the army of invasion was held on the bank of the Jamuna for a couple of weeks before it actually marched to the south. Ram Chandra Deva accorded reception to it at Devagiri on February 3, 1311 and, as usual, provided all the facilities for its onward march into the kingdom of Dwarsamudra.[80] The imperial army was divided into regiments of ten thousands; a regiment being further split up into units of one thousand soldiers each to facilitate its quick movements in various directions and ensure effectiveness of the command. The Hoysala ruler Vir Ballala III was terrified into submission after a brief show of resistance; he surrendered his elephants, horses and the treasure and offered to pay the annual tribute to Delhi.

It was at Dwarsamudra that Malik Kafur learnt about the outbreak of a fratricidal war between the two Pandya princes in the far south. Kulashekhar, the Pandya ruler of Madura, was inclined more favourably towards his elder but natural son Vir Pandya and this excited the jealousies of his younger but legitimate son Sunder Pandya. Sunder Pandya murdered his father in a fit of anger and claimed the throne for himself but was turned out of Madura by Vir Pandya. Hardpressed, Sunder Pandya appealed to Malik Kafur, who was then stationed at Dwarsamudra, for help. This provided a golden opportunity to the latter to lead a contingent of the imperial troops into the far south. He was faithfully assisted by Vir Ballala III in this enterprise. Vir Pandya fled the capital on the approach of the imperial army which overran the Pandya kingdom, apparently in search of the fugitive prince, and plundered all the important towns and temples that fell its way. Having realised his folly, though very late, Sunder Pandya also left the imperialists and fled into the jungles. According to Firishta, Malik Kafur reached as far as Rameshwaram where he erected a mosque in honour of the victory of Islam. Politically, his campaign to the far south proved a failure because both of the Pandya princes alluded him and none made a formal treaty of surrender nor recognised the paramountcy of Alauddin Khalji over the dominions of Madura. The campaign proved, however, most fruitful from the point of view of material gains; Malik Kafur returned to Delhi on October 18, 1311, with 612 elephants, 96,000 maunds of gold, 20,000 horses and several chests of precious jewels and pearls.[81] Amir Khusrau gives the weight of the precious stones of incalculable value at 500 maunds. As a matter of fact, the booty

> to the city, the king himself came out to the Chubootra Nasiry, near the Budaon gate, to receive him, and there the conqueror laid all the spoils at his sovereign's feet. —*ibid.*

80. The town of Dwarsamudra, according to Firishta, was destroyed by the encroachment of the sea and lay in ruins during the mughal period —(Briggs), I, p. 214.

81. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 204.

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from Dwarsamudra and Madura defied all description and estimates in terms of its monetary value; Alaudd'n Khalji's life-long acquisitions, including the spoils of Devagiri, paled into insignificance before it. It may well have turned Mahmud of Ghazni in his grave 'with wistful eyes'.[82] Vir Ballala II accompanied Malik Kafur to Delhi and received a very generous treatment from Alauddin Khalji; after Ram Chandra Deva, he became the second most useful and obedient vassal of the sultanate in the south.

Malik Kafur had placed *everything* at the disposal of Alauddin Khalji; the heroic exploits of the south made him the most celebrated and powerful personality of the empire after the sultan. He became indispensable for his master in all the state affairs and continued to enjoy his unbounded faith till the end of his life.

Ram Chandra Deva attended the marriage of the crown prince Khizer Khan at Delhi with Dewal Rani, in early 1312, as a state guest; the *Rai Rayan* expired soon after his return to Devagiri and was succeeded by his eldest on Singhanadeva (or Shankar Deva). He had never approved of his father's collaboration with the imperialists. He stopped the payment of annual tribute to Delhi and tended to behave as an independent ruler; it necessitated yet another expedition to Devagiri by Malik Kafur in 1312. Singhanadeva was defeated and killed in action, and the kingdom of Devagiri was declared annexed to Delhi. Malik Kafur established his headquarters at Devagiri and occupied some territories of the adjoining kingdoms of Telengana and Dwarsamudra as well so that their chiefs might be kept under effective control. It so appears that Malik Kafur, because of his tremendous power and prestige, had excited the jealousy of some other nobles who gradually organised a clique opposed to his interests at the court; *Malika i Jahan* (the ex-queen Kamla Devi) and Alp Khan, who had been instrumental in reuniting the chief queen with her daughter Dewal Rani, were its prominent members; Khize Khan, the crown prince was their pampered royal patron. Being a hindu convert, with no filial attachments, Malik Kafur had no permanent adherents among the old khalji bureaucracy. He was no match for his rivals in the long-range struggle for power-politics at the court. Therefore, his intention seemed to be to establish the nucleus of his power far away from Delhi, and set up as an independent ruler of the Deccan. If

Silver does not find mention as having been taken as a part of the spoils during this expedition. When so much of gold, pearls and jewels were on hand, the carriage of silver as booty was not worthwhile; it ceased to be valuable for the plunderers. Firishta has it on record that silver was not used as coin in the far south in those days. 'No person wore bracelets, chains or rings of any other metal than gold; while all the plate in the houses of the great, and in the temples, was of beaten gold'.—(Briggs), I, pp. 214-15.

82. S.R. Sharma, *The Crescent in India—A Study in Medieval History*; Bombay, 1937, p. 117.

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possible, after the death of Alauddin Khalji. The sultan, however, could ill-afford to miss his company; he was also opposed to the policy of outright annexation of the southern territories. On his insistence, therefore, Malik Kafur had to hand over the charge of the kingdom of Devagiri to Harpaldeva, a prince of the Yadava dynasty, and returned to Delhi in 1315. The Deccan policy of Alauddin Khalji proved to be extremely successful. His imperialism had two facets; he resorted to annexation of territories and establishment of direct civil administration in northern India. On the other hand, he thoroughly exploited the south for the acquisition of its fabulous wealth and was contended by the acknowledgement of paramountcy of the hindu rulers. He thus avoided responsibility for the direct civil administration of the far-flung territories, nor did he come into clash with the people in general, who were left to deal with their own regional rulers, good or bad. The means of communication and transport, in those days, were very poor; therefore, outright annexation of the distant lands might have created untold difficulties for the imperial government, and led to rebellions or disaffection among the people at large. Alauddin Khalji saved himself from all these hazards; his Deccan policy was based on wisdom and foresight.

The maximum limits of Alauddin's empire had been reached by the end of the year 1311; his imperial sway extended roughly from the Indus in the northwest to the borders of the Bihar in the east, and from the 'foothills of the Himalayas in the north to Rameshwaram in the extreme south. His empire in the north comprised practically the whole of the medieval Punjab and Sind, the Indo-Gangetic valley (mod. Uttar Pradesh , Rajputana, Malwa and Gujarat; while the Deccan peninsula, to the south of the Narbada, was held by his tributary chiefs. Bihar, Bengal and Orissa did not, however, constitute a part of his empire.

Encounter with the Mongols

As mentioned elsewhere in this study, the mongols appeared on the northwestern frontier of India for the first time in 1220-21, under the leadership of Chengez Khan (1154-1226), when Iltutmish was the sultan of Delhi. The country was somehow saved from the fury of Chengez Khan, *albeit* the spread of mongol sway in Central Asia, Persia and Afghanistan rendered India vulnerable to their occasional onslaughts and created a permanent danger to the sultanate of Delhi. Before coming into the fold of Islam, the mongols observed some form of buddhism intermingled with superstitions. They were dead enemies of the muslims to begin with; before starting their attacks on India, they had already overrun almost all the prominent muslim states in central and western Asia. They carried destruction and devastation wherever they went and slaughtered the vanquished people like sheep and goats. Their appearance

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on the Indian frontier, therefore, spread a wave of horror in northern India and posed a serious threat to the infant sultanate of Delhi.

Halaku Khan, a grandson of Chengez Khan, had founded the ruling houses of the ilkhan mongols in Persia; their lieutenants invaded India off and on upto the period of sultan Jalaluddin Khalji. By the time Alauddin Khalji ascended the throne, Deva Khan (1272-1306), the chaghtai ruler of Transoxiana, had acquired a premier position among the other mongol chiefs. He snatched Afghanistan from the ilkhans and began to look towards India with longing eyes. When he heard of the assassination of Jalaluddin Khalji, he made a determined bid to conquer India. His intention was not to permit the usurper, Alauddin Khalji, to consolidate his position at Delhi; therefore, he despatched, in quick succession, as many as six expeditions to wrest Delhi from his hands. Alauddin, however, met the challenge squarely and foiled his plans by beating off the mongol hordes with heavy losses.

The first mongol invasion took place immediately after Alauddin's accession to the throne. Under the leadership of Kadar Khan, ten *tumans*[83] of the mongol marauders crossed the Indus (1296-97) and carried fire and sword in Punjab and Sind; Lahore was occupied and sacked by them. Zafar Khan and Ulugh Khan stopped their onward march in the Jalandhar Doab and inflicted a crushing defeat on them in a bloody encounter; about 20,000 mongols were killed or wounded in action while hundreds of them were captured and beheaded later.

The second mongol invasion (1298) was led by Saldi; he overran Sind and captured its stronghold Siwistan (Sehwan probably) which he converted into his headquarters. Zafar Khan led a sudden assault on the fort and snatched it from the mongols in a hand to hand fight 'with the axe and sword, spear and javelin'. The entire mongol army perished in the struggle; Saldi and his followers were taken captives along with their women and children and sent to Delhi in chains. Barani writes:

> The victory inspired awe of Zafar Khan in every heart and the sultan also looked askance at him in consequence of his

83. The male population of the mongols was divided into military divisions based on decimal system; its lowest unit was called *urban* which comprised ten horsemen (*fard*; pl. *afrad*) under the charge of a *malik*; its highest division of 10,000 horses called a *tuman* whose commander was known as *Amir Tuman*.

The numerical figures about the armies and the quantity of loot and plunder, etc., as given by the medieval chroniclers, are usually exaggerated or, at the best, rough estimates, which should be taken with a grain of salt.

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fearlessness, generalship, and intrepidity, which showed that a Rustam had been born in India.[84]

Zafar Khan was given charge of Samana, an important military post in Punjab, to defend the capital against the mongol onslaught. Barani makes highly uncomplimentary remarks about the attitude of sultan Alauddin Khalji and his brother Ulugh Khan towards Zafar Khan. He says that, instead of feeling pleased with Zafar Khan, for the faithful and meritorious service rendered by him to the state, the sultan and his brother 'conceived a hatred and jealousy'[85] of him because he had become famous as a hero eclipsed their own military exploits.[86] As luck would have it, the mongols appeared on the northwestern frontier like locusts for the third time before the close of the year 1299; according to the medieval chroniclers, they numbered about two lakhs (twenty *tumans*) and were led by Qutulugh Khwaja, the youthful son of Deva Khan. They crossed the Indus and made straight for Delhi without molesting the people or engaging the Indian contingents stationed in Punjab. Obviously, their object was to conquer Delhi and liquidate the sultanate altogether. Hardpressed, Alauddin Khalji sent express instructions to all the provincial governors to rush to the capital with their armies for its defence. Consternation prevailed in Delhi; panic-stricken people from the neighbouring villages flocked therein, making the problems of defence and provisions all the more difficult.[87] Some counsellors of the sultan advised him to fight a defensive war from within the fort of Delhi but Alauddin Khalji

84. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 165.

85. *ibid.*

86. Barani goes too far in his wild speculation about Alauddin's ungrateful and vile nature which prompted him to get rid of Zafar Khan before it was too late. He writes:

> Two modes of dealing with him (Zafar Khan) seemed open for the sultan's choice. One was to send him, with a few thousand horses to Lakhnauti to take that country, and leave him there to supply elephants and tribute to the sultan; the other was to put him out of the way by poison or by blinding.
>
> —*ibid.*

87. According to Barani,

> Great anxiety prevailed in Delhi, and the people of the neighbouring villages took refuge within its walls. The old fortifications had not been kept in repair, and terror prevailed such as never before had been seen or heard of. All men, great and small, were in dismay. Such a concourse had crowded into the city that the streets and markets and mosques could not contain them. Everything became very dear. The roads were stopped against caravans and merchants, and distress fell upon the people.
>
> —*Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 166.

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preferred to challenge the foe in the open. With the beating of the war drums, he moved out of the capital and established his camp in the plain of Kili, at a distance of about six miles to the northern outskirts of Delhi. The number of his armed personnel multiplied quickly by the arrival of contingents from the various parts of his dominions. The main army was arranged in the battle-array and entrenched; the battle-line was extended over many miles with the fresh arrivals. Zafar Khan held the right wing and Ulugh Khan the left, while Alauddin himself commanded the centre. A reserve force of picked horse was kept behind the battle-lines under the charge of Ulugh Khan to be used in case of emergency. The mongols were engaged as soon as they showed their appearance on the bee-line. Thousands lay dead on both sides in the bloody clash of arms. Zafar Khan broke through the enemy's lines and gave a hot chase to the fleeing mongols for eighteen *kos* without any supporting force in his own rear. Targhi, a mongol leader, who had placed his *tuman* in ambush, saw through the game, and rushed forward to cut off Zafar Khan's party from its base camp. He entrapped the royal troops on their way back and cut them to a man; Zafar Khan fell fighting bravely. Ulugh Khan knew that his colleague Zafar Khan was in trouble but he did not send the reinforcements to save his life. As a matter of fact, Zafar Khan had committed a serious tactical mistake in chasing a part of the routed foe without a parallel movement from the centre and the left wing of the imperial troops. The sultan, who was in supreme command of the imperial army at the moment, had not permitted his generals to put their own battle-lines in disarray; therefore, Zafar Khan, out of his misplaced enthusiasm and emotional nature, defied the supreme command, dashed through the enemy zone without coordination of efforts with his colleagues and brought peril upon himself. Alauddin Khalji was, therefore, not responsible for the sad end of Zafar Khan's life.

The mongols were disheartened by the tough resistance put up by Delhi; they broke the engagement that very night and retreated to the Khyber pass by forced marches. Qutulugh Khwaja was taken ill and died on the way to Transoxiana. Alauddin Khalji returned to the capital in triumph; the mongols had been repulsed, and 'the brave and fearless Zafar Khan had been got rid of without disgrace'.[88] None paid tribute to the fallen general at the court of Alauddin though his heroic deeds were 'long remembered among the mongols; and if their cattle refused to drink, they used to ask if they saw Zafar Khan'.[89]

Three successive defeats gave a setback to the mongol power though for a shortwhile. During the next two years (1300-02 A.D.), Deva Khan remained busy with some other central Asian feuds

88. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 168.

89. *ibid*

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while the much-needed relief was utilised by Alauddin Khalji to reorganise and strengthen his army and launch a comprehensive scheme for the subjugation of unconquered Indian territories. He conquered Ranthmbhor, sent an expedition to Warrangal, and laid siege to the rajput stronghold of Chittor under his personal command. He was at Chittor in February 1303 when the intelligence about the reappearance of mongols on the Indian borders reached him. They numbered 1,20,000 and were led by a seasoned general Targhi Beg who had commanded a *tuman* in third invasion (1229 A.D.) and killed Zafar Khan. Alauddin allowed the siege of Chittor to continue but himself hastened to Delhi with a part of his army and made hurried arrangements for its defence which were far from being adequate. The mongols laid siege to the capital and put the neighbouring villages and towns to plunder. The siege of Delhi lasted forty days when, all of a sudden, the mongols decamped and retreated from India to the great amazement and relief of Alauddin Khalji and his people. In fact, the mongols were very poor at laying siege to the fortified installations; they grew impatient and could not manipulate provisions or sustain their enthusiasm in the long drawn-out conflicts. Their failure to take Delhi by storm undid their enterprise and, with every passing day of the siege, Targhi Beg apprehended that his army might be encircled and destroyed by the Indian contingents from the provincial headquarters, which were gradually closing upon the capital. Hence the mongols thought of their safety in retreat before it was too late.[90]

The repeated defeats suffered by the mongols at the hands of Indian forces, instead of disheartening them, kindled, in their hearts, the spirit of revenge. Two years later (1305 A.D.), Ali Beg, a decendant of Chengiz Khan, accompanied by Khwaja Tartaq (or Tash) and Targhi Beg, led 50,000 mongols into India with the sole object of loot and plunder, destruction and devastation, They ravaged Multan, then swept across the fertile plains of Punjab and moved towards the foothills of the Shiwaliks. Targhi Beg was struck down by a chance arrow of an Indian defender, somewhere on the Sutlej. The mongols avoided contact with the heavily guarded forts, did not engage the Indian contingents, and to the great bewilderment of Alauddin Khalji, bypassed even Delhi, which was strongly

90. Barani opines that

> If Targhi had remained another month upon the Jumna, the panic would have reached to such a height that a general flight would have taken place and Delhi would have been lost...This...preservation of Delhi seemed to wise men, one of the wonders of the age. The Mongols had sufficient forces to take it; they arrived at the most opportune time; they made themselves masters of the roads, and hemmed in the royal army and its appurtenances. The sultan's army had not been replenished, and no reinforcements reached it. But for all this the mongols did not prevail.
>
> —*Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; pp. 190-91.

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defended by the imperial troops. Instead, they spread themselves in the Jumna Doab and the Gangetic valley and indulged in loot and arson.

Once the sultan understood the true motives of the mongols, he adopted new tactics to put a stop to their vandalism. He himself safeguarded the capital while Malik Kafur cut off their lines of retreat, herded them together, as far as possible, by a flanking movement of the royal armies, and struck at them near Amroha with a terrible force. The nucleus of the mongol army was smashed, and 'the battle-field was covered with heaps of slain like shocks of corn'.[91] About eight thousand mongols were taken captive and sent to Delhi where they were paraded through the streets and then put to death. Ali Beg and Tartaq were spared their lives for a while but beheaded soon after they displayed their hostile intentions.

The worst fate awaited those who had escaped from the trap laid by Malik Kafur. Ghazi Malik (later Ghiasuddin Tughluq, the founder of the Tughluq Dynasty of Delhi), then the governor of Dipalpur, led his army towards the Indus on the orders of the sultan. He lay in ambush and entrapped the mongol fugitives, who were killed like rats. Firishta says that those of the mongols who

> escaped the sword, finding it impossible to force their way home, retired into the desert, where thirst and the hot winds, which blow at that season, put an end to their miserable lives.[92]

He adds that

> All the mongol women and children, taken in this war, were sent to different parts of the kingdom, to be sold in the markets, as slaves.[93]

Undeterred, the mongols made yet another bid to lay their hands on the Indian soil. Iqbalmanda and Kubak invaded India towards the close of the year 1306, at the head of about 50,000 mongols; this was the sixth and the last invasion of the series that took place during the reign of Alauddin Khalji. The mongols were divided into two groups, possibly three, under the charge of different leaders who advanced by separate routes; Kubak marched upon Lahore while Iqbalmanda followed a southerly course and reached

91. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 198.
92. Firishta (Briggs), I, p. 207.
93. *ibid*; pp. 207-8.

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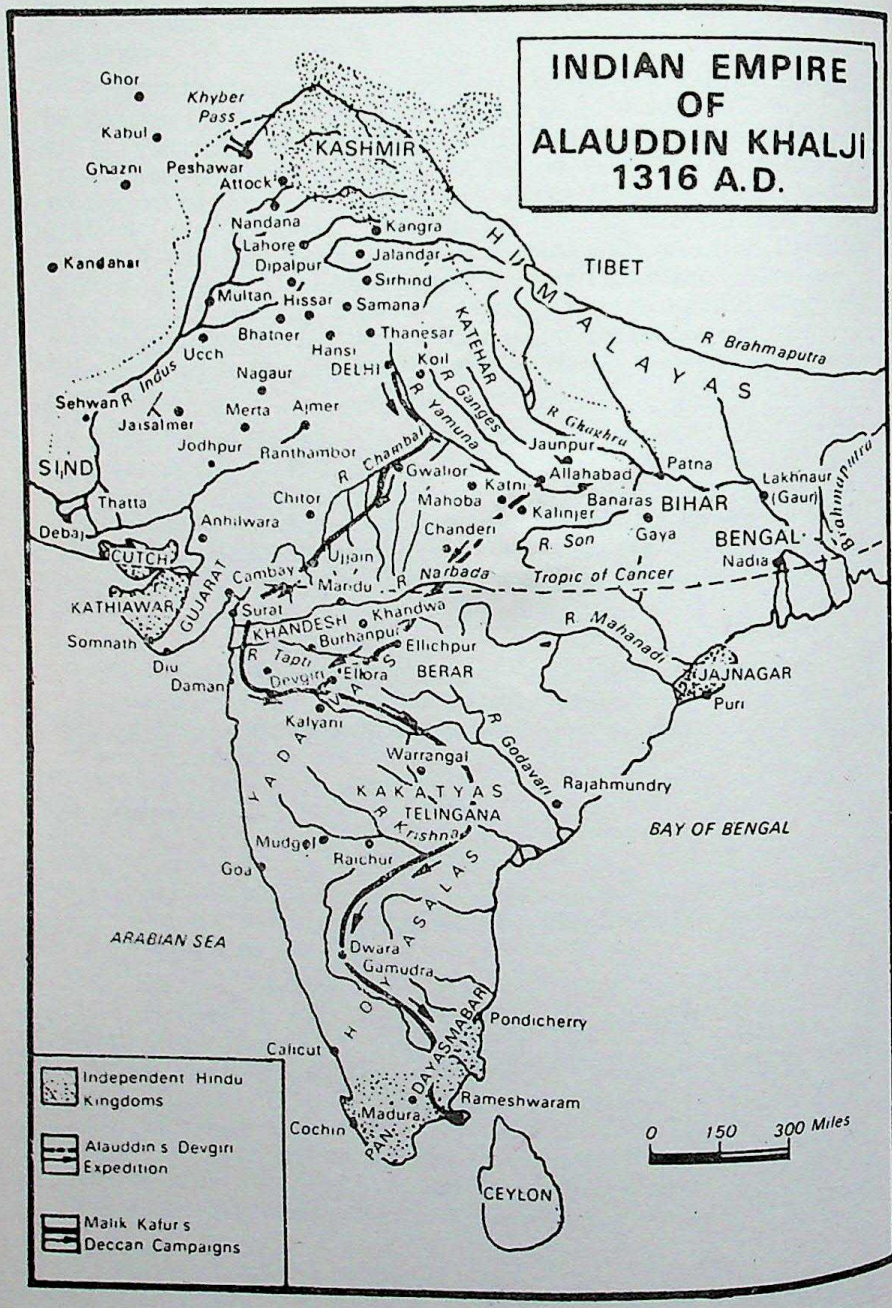

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as far as Nagor. Malik Kafur and Ghazi Malik destroyed the army of Kubak on the Ravi and sent 'some thousand' mongols, including Kubak, as prisoners to Delhi where they were tortured to death 'according to the custom of the times'.[94] Iqbalmanda's army was defeated and annihilated near Nagor in a pitched battle; most probably, the mongol leader escaped to Afghanistan with a handful of the survivors.

It marked the end of mongol terror in India for many years to come. The mongols 'conceived such a fear and dread' of the imperial armies of Delhi 'that all fancy for coming to Hindustan was washed clean out of their breasts.[95] They were rather hardpressed to defend themselves against the Indian expeditions to Afghanistan. Ghazi Malik, as the warden of the marches, not only defended effectively the northwestern frontier but also led periodical raids to Kabul and Ghazni and 'laid the inhabitants under heavy contributions'.[96] The mongols had, perhaps, never received such a rough treatment anywhere else as they did at the hands of the armies of the sultanate.

Alauddin Khalji adopted Balban's 'policy of blood and iron' in tackling the mongol menace with a vengeance. He converted the whole of northwestern India into a defensive belt against the mongol inroads; it comprised the capital itself, the Punjab with its military governorship at Samana, Dipalpur, Lahore and Multan, and the Indus valley. The old forts were repaired and many new ones built at strategic points; these were heavily garrisoned by the imperial troops, under the charge of youthful and competent generals. They were under the direct supervision and control of the central government. All the forts and other military installations were interconnected by widening of the old highways and the construction of new roads. A highly efficient spy system was put in operation on the frontier which posted the sultan with the latest developments in the political-cum-military situation of the region within no time. The defences of the capital received special attention of the sultan. The fort of Delhi was repaired and greatly improved while a new fort was built at Siri which safeguarded the royal palaces, treasury and the secretariat. Alauddin Khalji raised a huge standing army, equipped with well-bred horses and the improved weapons of war, including the mechanised instruments of destruction. He struck terror in the hearts of mongols by inflicting the most barbaric punishments on them in the spirit of 'tit for tat'. By his brutal treatment of the mongols, the sultan removed their terror from the hearts of the Indians, boosted the morale of his own army and made his subjects confident of 'his ability to protect them

94. *ibid*; p. 208.
95. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 199.
96. Firishta (Briggs), I, p. 208.

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against the mongols'.[97] Alauddin's frontier policy was based on scientific lines and it proved extremely successful. To quote Barani,

> All fear of the Mongols entirely departed from Delhi and the neighbouring provinces. Perfect security was everywhere felt, and the *raiyats* of those territories, which had been exposed to the inroads of the Mongols, carried on their agriculture in peace.[98]

Alauddin's army which stood as a bulwark against the foreign invasions from the northwest in the earlier part of his reign, helped him in the conquest of southern India at a later stage, which transformed the sultanate of Delhi into a mighty Indian empire. The repeated mongol onslaughts terrified the Indians who were constrained to look towards the sultan for the protection of their lives and property; this factor, indirectly, helped Alauddin Khalji in enforcing a highly centralised autocratic rule and barbaric tendencies. Alauddin Khalji emerged as the saviour of his people who glossed over his excesses and reposed full confidence in him as his respectful and docile subjects.

3 : Government in Action under Alauddin Khalji

Administrative Reforms

The Islamic polity was based primarily on the Persian 'pagan' traditions; the administrative system of the sultans of Delhi[99] was an adaptation of the universal model to suit the peculiar Indian conditions. Alauddin Khalji did not bring about radical changes in the infrastructure of the mamluk polity; he was not for that matter an innovator in the field of administration; nonetheless, he was an administrator *par excellence*. He took personal interest in the administrative affairs, set the guidelines, and executed his plans with utmost severity. He concentrated his attention on the functional aspect of the government and made it highly efficient by introducing strong discipline and a sense of duty among the services. The capable and efficient officials were rewarded while the incapable, inefficient and corrupt among them were weeded out mercilessly.

97. Sultan Hameed Warsi, *History of Alauddin Khalji*; Allahabad, 1930, p. 21.
98. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 199.
99. For defails refer to Chapter 10 of this study.

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Alauddin Khalji overhauled the mamluk hierarchy by introducing changes in the managerial control; therein lay his real contribution as the best administrator among all the sultans of Delhi.

The mamluk sultans had planted not only a foreign administrative system in India but also thrust the turkish bureaucracy over the head of their subjects; it was foreign in composition and character and totally alien to the socio-cultural conditions, customs, traditions and the sentiments of the Indians. That is why it could not take deep roots in the Indian soil. Alauddin Khalji adopted the structure of 'slave' polity almost in *toto*; he was not a genius like Sher Shah Sur (1540-45) or Akbar the Great (1558-1605) who could effect structural changes in the civil administration as such. More as a practical statesman than an administrator, however, Alauddin Khalji realised the shortcomings and weaknesses of the turkish aristocracy, and the inherent dangers to which the sultans exposed themselves by depending exclusively upon them in the matter of organsation of government. He, therefore, did away with the traditional turkish aristocracy at the top level and reduced its strength in the middle-level administrative hierarchy as far as possible. He secularised the khalji bureaucracy and threw open the state services to the commoners, including the hindus, the hindu converts to Islam and the other unprivileged muslims. As the khaljis did not belong to the turkish ruling elite of the 'slave' sultans of Delhi, they identified themselves with the Indian masses; the new ministry of Alauddin Khalji, as it came into existence after about a year of his assuming the reins of government, did not include even a single turkish noble of the traditional ruling class; all of the incumbents were drawn from the non-privileged and 'non-descript' masses, 'the commonality of India'.[100]

Alauddin Khalji was an autocrat of the first order; his despotism would very often attain monstrous proportions. Consequently, the working of government under him was deeply influenced by the personal character of the sultan. He had won the crown by force, and he could hold his own by his military prowess. His was a police state, established on the barbaric principle—'might is the supreme right'; to which may be added Hitler's rhetoric that the dispute as to what is right can be decided by the arbitrament of war'. His ministers, counsellors and legal advisers were all his creatures, none of whom held his place in the royal court in his own right.

During the early years of his reign, Alauddin Khalji had to face quite a few revolts at the hands of disaffected nobles and his ambitious kinsmen. There was no fixed law of succession among the sultans of Delhi, and Alauddin Khalji was especially a usurper

100. Warsi, Alauddin Khalji; *op. cit*; p. 41.

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who had no hereditary, legal or moral claim to the throne. That is why his ambitious nephew Akat Khan conspired against him, struck him down and, taking him for dead, sat on the imperial throne where he promptly received homage from the nobles; he had to pay with his life later, for the only fault was that he had failed to chop off the head of Alauddin Khalji when the latter lay unconscious on the ground in a pool of blood. It 'roused' the sultan 'from his dreams of security and pride', and, in consultation with his confidential advisers, he came to the conclusion that there were 'four' causes of such revolts.[101] These were—the sultan's indifference towards the state affairs, particularly the espionage, social intercourse of nobles and intermarriages among them, the use of wine, and the abundance of wealth. Alauddin took prompt steps to eliminate these causes.

In the first instance, the sultan began to take keen interest in the day to day administration and gradually consolidated his grip over the entire state machinery. He was an illiterate man when he acquired the throne, and being militant by temperament, did not enjoy the confidence of the learned men at the court. It is said that, in the beginning of his reign, the *ulema* and the sophisticated courtiers made it 'a maxim not to talk upon subjects, beyond the king's knowledge'.[102] Alauddin became conscious of 'the disadvantages under which he laboured'; he, therefore, 'applied himself privately to study, and notwithstanding the difficulty of acquiring the knowledge of Persian, after he once bent his mind to it, he soon read all addresses, and made himself acquainted with the best authors in the language'.[103] After he had made such progress as to be able to take part in learned discourses, Alauddin Khalji held detailed discussions with his ministers on administrative problems, issued directives and took the defaulting officials to task with an iron hand. He organised an efficient system of reporting and espionage to keep himself abreast of all the developments within his dominions. He received regular reports about the working of the government and general condition of the people from three sources—the officers in charge, the news reporters (*barids*) and the spies (*munhis*). The *barids* were known to the public while the *munhis* were undetectable; the latter communicated directly with the sultan and were a real terror to all the high and low. They were spread all over the empire. The arrangement made was such that 'no action of good or bad men was concealed' from the sultan. 'No one could stir without his knowledge, and whatever happened in the houses of the nobles, great men and officials, was communicated to the sultan'[104]

101. Refer to Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; *E&D*. III, p. 178. & Firishta (Briggs), I, p. 195.
102. Firishta (Briggs), I, p. 197.
103. *ibid*.
104. Barani, *Tarikh*, *op. cit*; p. 179.

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by his secret agents. The system of reporting went to such a length that 'nobles dared not speak aloud even in the largest palaces, and if they had anything to say they communicated by signs'.[105] The sultan's spies made the high-ups, including the ministers, princes of the royal blood, queens and other members of the royal household tremble within their own apartments and none was sure as to which of his family or company was a secret agent of the sultan. On the basis of these reports, the sultan wiped out the disaffected nobles and their families, called for the explanation of the defaulting officials and punished the people at large.

Secondly, Alauddin Khalji introduced total prohibition in the capital and its adjoining territories; gambling was also forbidden. The wine shops were closed down and 'the wine merchants and the gamblers were turned out of the city, and the heavy taxes which had been levied from them, were abolished'.[106] The sultan himself gave up drinking parties and directed that 'all the china and glass vessels of his banqueting room should be broken'; their fragments were thrown out in front of the Badaun gate where they constituted a big heap. On the orders of the sultan 'jars and casks of wine were brought out of the royal cellars and emptied at the Badaun gate in such abundance that mud and mire was produced as in the rainy season'.[107] The use of wine in feasts and social get-togethers was declared a penal offence; exemplary punishments were inflicted on those who disobeyed the law; nevertheless, selling and drinking of wine continued secretly and the sultan was, ultimately, constrained to permit a limited use of wine and spirits to the people in the privacy of their homes.

Thirdly, Alauddin Khalji took stringent measures to bring the nobility under his effective control. As stated earlier, the traditional turkish nobility of the mamluk era was wiped out and replaced by a new class of aristocracy, most of whom were his own creatures; therefore, the sultan did not face much difficulty in accomplishing his objectives. He placed numerous curbs on their social mobility and inter-relationships. The nobles were 'not permitted to visit each other's houses, or give feasts, or hold meetings'. They were forbidden to enter into matrimonial alliances without the consent of the sultan. Barani writes that this order was carried out with such rigidity that

> no stranger was admitted into a nobleman's house. Feasting and hospitality fell quite into disuse. Through fear of the spies, the nobles kept themselves quiet; they gave no parties and had little communication with each other. No man of a seditious, rebellious, or evil reputation was allowed to come

105. *ibid*; pp. 179-80.
106. *ibid*; p. 189.
107. *ibid*.

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near them. If they went to the *sarais*, they could not lay their heads together, or sit down cosily and tell their troubles. Their communications were brought down to a mere exchange of signs.[108]

Fiscal Policy and Revenue Reforms

The abundance of wealth which had been diagnosed by Alauddin Khalji's advisers to be the fourth cause of revolts, was tackled by the sultan in a very comprehensive way. He could understand better the role of money in determining the fate or fortunes of the kingdoms.[109] In order to eliminate this 'source of trouble', he felt tempted and took vigorous steps to lay his hands on the property of the nobility and the well-to-do citizens. In a more sophisticated language, the sultan adopted a new fiscal policy and introduced important changes in the revenue system of the state; he was, in fact, the first among the sultans of Delhi, who took keen interest in regulating the financial affairs as a matter of state policy. By a 'stroke of the pen', Alauddin Khalji abolished the zamindari system in the crown lands and by a thrust of his sword, he confiscated the *jagirs* and estates, stopped the practice of issuing grants of land in lieu of state service and abolished the pensions and endowments 'beyond a few thousand tankas'.[110] Of course, there are instances to prove that the system of granting lands in lieu of service or in *in'am* could not be given up by Alauddin's government altogether. A probability has also been expressed that 'all assignments were not confiscated but their management was taken over by the government'.[111] There are, however, reasons to believe that

108. *ibid*; pp. 181-82.

109. Alauddin's confidential advisers told him that

> Money...engenders evil and strife, and brings forth pride and disloyalty. If men had no money, they would attend to their own busi ess, and would never think of revolts. And if rioters and rebels had no money, they could never count upon the assistance of low and turbulent people,
>
> —Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 178.

Firishta, who belonged to the later medieval age, interprets the fourth cause of the revolts in a bit different way. According to him,

> The last and not the least cause, they (the 'wise men') thought, arose from the unequal division of property; they considered that the wealth of a rich empire, if confined to a few persons, only rendered them, as governors of provinces, more like independent princes than subjects of the state.
>
> —(Briggs), I, p. 195.

110. Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 179.

111. K.S. Lal, *The Khaljis*, *op. cit*; p. 243.

> The land reforms were not carried out in the right spirit, and proved to be short-lived.

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Alauddin Khalji did apply the 'Morton's fork' to extract surplus money from his subjects on one pretext or the other. As mentioned earlier, soon after consolidating his position, the sultan laid his hands on the ex-Jalali nobles and deprived them of their lands and riches on the excuse that they were turncoats and hence 'untrustworthy'. A couple of years later, this practice was made universal. Barani's observations[112] on this issue, though full of exaggeration, reveal the truth that Alauddin Khalji took drastic steps to cripple the power of the nobility and strengthen the hands of the central government. But for the personal factor which lay behind his medieval outlook while talking of 'the state', the measure adopted by him seemed to be progressive, the success of which could have, ultimately, led to the evolution of a strong and stable central government. Alauddin Khalji did absolutely nothing to create even a semblance of the central authority, apart from the person of the sultan himself, which could hold intact such a mighty state that he had brought into being, by his military prowess and forceful character. After having dealt with the nobility and other grandees of the state, Alauddin Khalji turned his attention towards the feudatory hindu chieftains, called *rais*, *rawats* or *thakurs*, and hereditary hindu landlords, referred to by the Barani as the *khuts*, *muqaddams* and *chaudharis*. The bulk of the cultivable land, under the sultans of Delhi, was held by the hindu peasant proprietors (*balahars* of Barani) in their hereditary rights, according to the ancient traditions. So also was the case with their semi-official rural leaders and headmen of the villages—the *khuts*, *muqaddams* and *chaudharis* who acted as landlords or 'intermediaries' for the collection of land revenue and other state demands from the village folk.[113] It has correctly been said that

> Alauddin realized the limitations of his power. He was a muslim ruler of a non-muslim land and he knew that he could only govern on principles acceptable to the hindu masses.[114]

Therefore, the sultan 'had to leave the hereditary hindu dignitaries and their people to their traditional ways of life.[115]

These *khuts*, *muqaddams* and *chaudharis* had, however, enriched themselves at the cost of the peasants as well as the state. They charged heavy dues in state demand and their collection fees (*khuti*) from the former, but paid very little to the exchequer. They embezzled the government money, fleeced the tillers of the soil and enjoyed luxurious life; they 'paid no heed to the revenue officials'.

112. Barani, *Tarikh*, pp. 179-80.
113. *Comp. HI*, V, p. 356.
114. *ibid*; p. 354.
115. *ibid.*

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Alauddin Khalji adopted a strong policy to remedy the situation. He issued two regulations to settle the state demand. The first regulation (*zabita*) adopted measurement of the cultivable land as the principle for determining the land revenue; *biswa* was declared to be the standard unit of measurement. The government demand was fixed at half of the produce which was to be realised 'without any diminution', and 'this rule was to apply to *khuts* (landlords) and *balahars* (cultivators) without the slightest distinction'.[116]

The second regulation related to a levy on the cattle. A tax for pasturage, at a fixed rate, was levied and demanded 'for every inhabited house, so that no animal, however wretched, could escape the tax'. It was made applicable to all the inhabitants, rich or poor, high or low.[117]

Alauddin Khalji was the first muslim ruler of Delhi who introduced measurement of land as the basis for the assessment of the state demand—one of the well-established ancient Indian customs. Of course, the demand for half the produce as land revenue was excessive; nevertheless, it was in accordance with the general nature of Alauddin Khalji. The sultan deprived the *khuts* of their special privileges and abolished their *khuti*—'the collection charges'. They were also put under obligation to pay land revenue and other cesses at the same rate at which the other peasants were taxed. Barani's account on this point is not clear but it so appears that the *khuts* were expected to pay revenue on the land under their personal cultivation only, and not on behalf of or for the other peasants. If this is correct, then we conclude that Alauddin Khalji had abolished the *zamindari* or 'intermediary' status of the *khuts*, *muqaddams* and *chaudharis*, and struck a serious blow to the traditional hindu landed aristocracy. Thereafter, they might have continued to hold their hereditary family titles but we are not sure if they also continued to perform their old functions of revenue collection without the receipt of their collection fees. This conclusion seems to be correct in the light of a meaningful statement made by Barani in the course of his narrative. He says:

> The same rules for the collection of the tribute (taxes) applied to all alike, and the people were brought to such a state of obedience that one revenue officer would string twenty *khuts*, *muqaddams* or *chaudharis* together by the neck, and enforce payment by blows.[118]

Alauddin Khalji had a vast revenue establishment; it is probable that some of the old *khuts*, *muqaddams* and *chaudharis*

116. Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 182.
117. *ibid*.
118. Barani, *Tarikh*, pp. 182-83.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

were enrolled as revenue collectors on the new terms and remuneration offered by the state. Alauddin enforced strict discipline among the revenue personnel; 'collectors, clerks and other officers employed in revenue matters, who took bribes and acted dishonestly, were dismissed'.[119] Barani asserts that :

> There was no chance of a single *tanka* being taken dishonestly, or as bribery, from any hindu or musulman. The revenue collectors and officers were so coerced and checked that for five hundred or a thousand tankas, they were imprisoned and kept in chains for years...Oft times fiscal officers fell into prison and had to endure blows and stripes.[120]

Such being the case, Barani's observation is correct that

> Men looked upon revenue officers as something worse than fever. Clerkship was a great crime, and no man would give his daughter to a clerk.[121]

We need not attach much significance to those statements of Barani which impart a communal touch to the fiscal and revenue reforms of Alauddin Khalji. He enforced these measures over his subjects irrespective of whether they were hindus or muslims; it is just a coincidence that it were most of the hindus who were affected by his revenue policy.

Price Control and Market Regulations

Alauddin's ambition to expand his kingdom and the anxiety to protect it from the mongol menace prompted him to raise a huge standing army. Its dire necessity was felt in 1303 when he was suddenly caught between the two whirlwinds—the prestigious siege of Chittor and the mongol invasion of Delhi. Alauddin was successful in the two-pronged struggle but he made up his mind, thereafter to recruit a permanent army 'not only large, but choice, well-armed, with archers, and all ready for immediate service'.[122] His soldiers were not an ordinary lot; they were the favoured children of the sultanate, upon whose faithful and efficient service depended the safety of the crown; they were materially rich and lived much more comfortably than the masses. Alauddin was confronted with the problem how to increase the strength of the armed forces on payment of a moderate salary without adversely affecting their standard of living. His successful military exploits

119. *ibid.*
120. *ibid*; p. 183.
121. *ibid.*
122. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; *E&D*, III, p. 191.

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had already resulted in the excessive flow of gold and silver in the capital and its adjoining towns. It led to the rise of prices; and, with the increase of armed personnel, the circulation of money in the market and consequent rise of the price level seemed to be a natural corollary. This might, in turn, necessitate increase in the salaries of the soldiers in the years to come. It was apprehended that, in case the sultan was called upon to 'settle a large amount of pay on the army' year after year, the royal treasury, which was full to the brim at that time, would be exhausted within five or six years.[123] The sultan was anxious to save the state economy from the vicious circle of inflation and price rise. After considerable deliberations, he introduced a salary structure in conformity with a dignified standard of living of the various categories of soldiers. The salary of a foot soldier was fixed at 78 *tankas*[124] *per annum*, while a horseman, who was provided with a horse by the state, got double the amount, i.e., 156 *tankas*. If the horseman maintained his own horse (*yak aspa*) he was given 78 *tankas extra per annum* as the horse allowance; this allowance was also doubled when he could muster two horses (*do aspa*), thus bringing his total emoluments to 312 *tankas per annum*. The sultan desired that this salary structure should be made rigid and permanent. His 'sagacious advisers' argued that in case 'the necessaries of life could be bought at a low rate', it would be possible 'to maintain a large and permanent army' upon the scales of pay as fixed by the sultan. They further explained that 'the necessaries of life would never become cheap until the price of grain was fixed by regulations and tariffs'.[125]

Alauddin Khalji, therefore, issued a number of economic regulations to determine the prices of various necessaries of life and ensure their regular supply to the people at fixed prices and without any inconvenience.[126] The fixation of prices was not done by the sultan arbitrarily, nor was his price structure based on the fluctuating supply and demand, good, or bad weather, or the speculative trends of the business community who raised or lowered the prices with motives of making the maximum profits Instead, Alauddin Khalji fixed the prices of goods on the progressive principle of 'production-cost' (*bar award*).[127] The first set of eight regulations dealt with corn and cereals. The first regulation (*zabita*)

123. *ibid.*

124. A *tanka* of silver was equivalent to the silver rupee of the mughal period; it was one *tola* in weight.

125. Barani, *op. cit*; p. 192.

126. Barani, *op. cit*; pp. 192-97.

127. Mohammad Habib & M·s (Dr) Afsar Khan, *The Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate* (being the Eng. trs. of *Fatawa i Jahandari* of Barani); Kitab Mahal, Allahabad, p. 35.

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fixed the price per maund of wheat at 7.5 jitals,[128] barley at 4 jitas, while cereals like *mash* and *mukhud* were to sell at 5 jitals and *moth* at 3 jitals per maund.

The land revenue from the *khalsa* villages was realised in kind (regulation 3). The grain was stored in the state granaries and during the days of scarcity, sold at the tariff rates, according to the needs of the people.

Alauddin appointed Malik Qabul, an intelligent and trustworthy servant of Ulugh Khan, to be the controller of all the grain markets (*shahna i mandi*).[129] He used to go round the markets 'in great state with many horse and foot', and was assisted in the discharge of his functions by a number of deputies and spies. Separate markets were set up for each major trade and each market was put under the charge of a *shahna* who worked in subordination to the chief controller of the markets.

All grain carriers (the *caravans*) of the kingdom were brought into a single corporation (*yak wujud*) under the charge of *shahna i mandi*. The merchants were registered and issued licences to bring grain from the far-off villages ; the provincial and local revenue officials helped them in the procurement of grain at fixed rates.[130] It was either acquired by the state granaries or sold by the merchants in the open market at the rates dictated by the government; the merchants were allowed to charge a moderate profit plus the cost of carriage over and above their procurement price. It is said that the margin of profit, permissible to the merchants was so low that, at the initial stage, some of the *caravans* did not abide by the government regulations. Barani records that the heads of such *caravans* were brought in chains before the *shahna i mandi* and kept in confinement 'until they agreed upon one common mode of action and gave bail for each other'.[131] The grain carriers were asked to settle along with their families, in the villages on the banks

128. The *tanka* were of gold as well as silver.
There were 50 jitals to a silver tanka: the jital was a copper coin, the weight of which is not known; some presume that it was also a *tola* in weight while the others hold that it weighed 1.75 *tolas*. If tanka is taken to be medieval equivalent of modern rupee, a jital was worth two paise. The *maund* of the days of Alauddin Khalji, as mentioned by Barani, comprised 40 *seers* and each seer weighed 24 *tolas*.

129. Regulation 2. Barani's description of the regulations is defective because he did not have the original documents at his disposal when he wrote the narrative. He has discussed all the economic measures with special reference to Delhi alone though we have reasons to believe that these economic regulations were made applicable to other parts of the *sultanate*, as well.

130. Regulation 6.

131. Barani, *Tarikh*, pp. 193-94.

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of the Jumna so that they might be able to transport grain from various parts of the country under the supervision of the government officials, and prevent the prices from rising above 'the royal standard'. As a result, so much grain found its way into the markets' that, in normal times, 'it was unnecessary to open the royal stores'.[132]

The fifth regulation provided for securing the cheapness of grain against regrating (*ihtikar*)—buying and hoarding of goods with a view to retailing at a profit. This rule was enforced so rigidly that no corn-dealer, farmer or anyone else 'could hold back secretly a maund or half a maund of grain' and sell it for a *dang* or a *diram* above the fixed price. The regrated grain, if discovered, was forfeited to the state and the regrator was fined.[133]

The sultan received the daily report regarding the market rates and the transactions of goods from three distinct sources—the controllers of the markets, the *barids* and the *munshis*.[134] If there was any variance in these reports, the defaulters were hauled up by the sultan. According to Barani's testimony, the specified scales of prices were maintained as long as Alauddin lived, irrespective of whether the 'rains were abundant or scanty'. The unvarying price of grain in the markets was 'looked upon as one of the wonders of the time'.[135] He narrates an incident that, during a season of drought, a junior *shahna* (not Malik Qabul) of a market, once or twice 'reported that the price (of grain) had risen half a jital, and he received twenty blows with the stick'.[136] Firishta observes, however, that

> The prices remained fixed during this reign; but in consequence of a want of water, a dearth ensued, and a difference took place in practice. It is difficult to conceive how so extraordinary a project should have been put in practice, without defeating its own end. Such a plan was neither before ever carried into effect, or (*sic*) has it been tried since; but it is confidently asserted that the orders continued throughout the reign of this monarch.[137]

132. *ibid*; p. 194.
133. *ibid*.
134. Regulation 7.
135. Barani, *Tarikh*, pp. 192-93.
136. *ibid*; p. 195.
137. Firishta (Briggs), I, p. 202.

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The eighth regulation provided for the rationing of grain in times of drought or famine. A quantity of corn sufficient for the daily supply of each *mohalla* to the capital was consigned to the local corn dealers (*baqqals*) every day from the government stores, and half a maund was allowed to the ordinary purchasers in the markets. The people from the adjoining villages also flocked to Delhi to purchase grain at the fixed rates. If, in times of scarcity, 'any poor reduced person' went to the market and did not get his requirement, the official incharge of the market was taken to task whenever the sultan came to know of it.[138] Of course, there were seasons of drought and shortages, but we do not hear of any large-scale famine and deaths by starvation during the reign of Alauddin Khalji; it must have been made possible only by the wise economic reforms and strict control of the markets by the government. Barani is fully justified to remark that

> This was indeed the wonder of the age; and no other monarch was able to affect it.[139]

The second set of regulations were issued by the sultan for the purpose of securing low prices for cloth and groceries.[140] The extensive lawns, which had long been out of use near the Badaun gate of the capital, were converted into an open market, called the *Sarai Adl*, for the sale and purchase of these commodities. A wing of this market was reserved for all transactions in cloth, piece goods and garments; it constituted the 'cloth market' which was put under the charge of *rais parwana* (permit officer). All the Indian and foreign merchants, who happened to be in the capital, were required to bring every sort of cloth to this market and sell it at the rates prescribed by the government. Like the corn dealers, the cloth merchants were also organised into a corporation; their names were registered in the office of the *rais parwana* and they had to execute bonds to the effect that they would bring specified quantities of cloth, from wheverer they could find, for sale in the capital's

138. Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 195.

139. *ibid*.

140. The price list of groceries for the capital included;

sugar candy, 1 *seer*	: 2 *jitals*
coarse sugar (*shakar*), 1 *seer*	: 1 *jital*
coarse sugar *surkh* (*gur*), 1 *seer*	: 0.5 *jitals*
lamp oil, 3 *seers*	: 1 *jital*
ghee, 1 *seer*	: 0.5 *jitals*
salt, 5 *seers*	: 1 *jital*
onions & garlic, 1 *seer*	: 1 *jital*

—Firishta (Briggs), I, p. 204.

The price list for other parts of the empire must have shown local and regional varitations.

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market. The coarse cloth and garments for common use were sold at the normal rates, based on the production-cost principle[141] *albeit* this was not the case with the superior qualities of cotton cloth, silks and other luxurious wear for the aristocracy. There was usually a heavy demand for such commodities in the capital and the labour involved in their procurement from far off centres of specialised production in Kashmir, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Bengal, entailed heavy expenditure. These goods were, therefore, sold at subsidised rates for the benefit of the aristocracy.[142] The multani traders, who were experts in cloth trade, were advanced, at one occasion, twenty *lakhs* of *tankas* as loan to bring the costly stuff from various parts of the country and sell it in Delhi at less than the procurement price. These traders, in a way, acted simply as the commission agents for the government, and all the losses in the transaction were met by the state exchequer. Such being the case, the purchase of these commodities was rationed. Permits were issued by the *rais parwana* to the aristocracy according to their status and purse for the purchase of specified quantities of goods. Firishta states that the export of finer qualities of cloth and silks from the capital was prohibited in order to prevent the crafty businessmen from buying the stuff from Delhi at a low price and selling it at higher rates elsewhere. Firishta also has it on record that the people were not permitted to wear superior garments and silks at home, except by special permission from the sultan, "which favour was only granted to men of rank'.[143]

The third set of regulations dealt with the sale and purchase of live-stock—the horses and cattle, and the slaves. The superior brands of horses, approved for the army, were divided into three grades; their prices were fixed at 100 to 120, 80 to 90 and 65 to 70 *tankas* for the first, second and third grade respectively. An ordinary pony for common use could, however, be had from 12 to 20 *tankas* only. The government saw to it that the merchants

141. The rates quoted by Barani:

chadar (ordinary bed sheets)	: 10 *jitals*
long cloth, coarse, per 40 yards	: 1 *tanka* (silver)
long cloth, fine, per 20 yards	: 1 *tanka*

142. Firishta gives a price list of 15 different varieties of the fine cloth and silks; many of these names have been lost and hence uncomparable with the modern stuff; they included among others,

cheer, Delhi per piece	: 16 *tankas*
cheer, Kotla, per piece	: 6 *tankas*
silahuti, fine, per piece	: 4 *tankas*
silahuti, middling, per piece	: 3 *tankas*
kirpas, fine, 20 yards	: 1 *tanka*

—(Briggs), I, p. 203.

143. *ibid.*

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who brought quality horses from far off lands, should not sell them to the local dealers wholesale, so that the latter might not charge higher prices from individual customers through second sales or by playing the role of middlemen (*dallals*). The goveanment issued permits to the local dealers and wealthy persons for the purchase of quality horses; the whole business was transacted at the market, specified for the purpose, a periodical review of which was held by the sultan himself. Because of their use in the armies, the horses were regarded much more valuable than the *homo sapiens*; therefore, in spite of the stern measures adopted by the government, 'many frauds were practised' in the sale and purchase of horses. Firishta writes that a number of horse dealers, who defied the government regulations, were either put to death or whipped out of the capital.[144]

The cattle—buffaloes, cows, oxen, camels, goats, sheep and asses, in short, every domesticated animal, could be purchased or sold only within the range of prices fixed by the government. The mamluk sultans of Delhi had brought with them the practice of enslaving the prisoners of war. Alauddin's reign was marked by continuous wars for imperial conquests and the mongol invasions ; therefore, there was abundance of slaves, both male and female, in the country who were sold and purchased at nominal prices just like cattle. According to Barani, the price of a slave girl was fixed at 5 to 12 *tankas* and that of a concubine at 20 to 40 *tankas*. A handsome young lad could be had for 20 to 30 *tankas* whereas the price of slave labourers varied from 10 to 15 *tankas* each. With the consumer's goods and domestic labour so cheap, a man of moderate means, say a horseman of Alauddin's army, could afford to enjoy a happy and comfortable life with one to four legally married wives, a number of concubines and a dozen of slave girls and slave labourers at his beck and call.

According to the traditional administrative set-up, all the general markets of the empire fell within the purview of the *diwan i riyasat*—'the ministry of commerce'; the office of *nazir*—'the superintendent of weights and measures' constituted a part of it. Alauddin Khalji activated this ministry by the appointment of Malik Yakub, the erstwhile *nazir*, to be the *diwan i riyasat*; he was a man of honesty and integrity, though as an administrator, he was notorious for severity and ruthlessness. All the *shahnas* of the various markets, including Malik Qabul, the controller of grain markets and the *rais parwana*, the incharge of the cloth market of the capital, were put under his charge. Thus the *diwan i riyasat* was made ultimately responsible for the successful implementation of the economic regulations throughout the empire.[145] To add more dignity and authority to his exalted

144. (Briggs), I, p. 204.

145. Barani (in) Preserving economic regulations in *Fatawa i Jahandari*

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office, Yakub was also made the *muhtasib*—'the censor of public morals'. The statute provided severe punishments to those who flouted the economic regulations; Yakub carried out these punishments like a tyrant and struck terror in the hearts of all those who dared to defy these regulations. All the *shahnas* were supplied the price lists of major commodities as approved by the central government, while they seem to have been authorised to fix prices for the unspecified stuff, within their own areas of jurisdiction, on the same pattern. They moved round the markets with a body of horse and whipped the fraudulent shopkeepers publicly. Malik Yakub created quite a stir in the markets of the capital where he carried out repeated checks on all the business transactions; he did not spare the buyers or sellers, Indian traders or the foreign *caravan* leaders, for the minutest infringement of the law. The defaulters were kicked, struck with blows and sticks and flogged in the thickest of the markets. The sultan himself took pains to check up through his slave boys and maid-servants that the shopkeepers did not cheat the poor, 'ignorant people and children' by giving them short weights ; 'flesh was cut off from the haunches of those' who resorted to this practice. Barani gives a vivid description of this barbaric punishment being inflicted on the shopkeepers by the inspectors, on the orders of the sultan. He writes:

> The certainty of this punishment kept the traders honest, and restraind them from giving short weight, and other knavish tricks. Nay, they gave good weight that purchasers often got somewhat in excess.

It is an irony of fate that the grand edifice of state-controlled economy built by Alauddin Khalji on brute force tumbled down like a house of cards with the disappearance of that masterly hand; the whole lot of economic regulations died with the sultan almost instantaneously, resulting in the spread of utter confusion and economic anarchy in the country.

An Estimate of Alauddiu Khalji

Alauddin Khalji was by far the greatest among the sultans of Delhi ; except Sher Shah Sur and Akbar, no muslim ruler of

supplements the account given by him in the *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*. He writes:

> The king should also know that every arrangement (*naqsh*) in the matter of buying and selling and price fixation, which he makes for capital will also appear in all his provinces. The officers and the *ra'iyyat* of his country will accept it and follow it.
>
> —*Fatawa i Jahandari* (Habib & Afsar), *op. cit.*, p. 36.

146. Barani, *Tarikh*, *op. cit*; p. 197.

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India stands comparison with him. As a man, he left much to be desired, *albeit* he was a born fighter, brilliant general, successful administrator and a far-sighted statesman. Courageous and fearless, ambitious and resourceful, Alauddin transformed the kingdom of Delhi into a mighty Indian empire by his sheer force of character and military skill ; the credit for the penetration of muslim arms and plantation of Islamic faith and culture in the south goes exclusively to him. He protected the *sultanate* as well as the people of India against the fury of the mongols ; his north-west frontier policy which has baffled many a government of the medieval and modern times, proved extremely successful. He struck terror in the hearts of the foreign invaders. A highly self-willed man, with unscrupulous and aggressive temperament, Alauddin stood like a rock in his determination; extremely sensitive and brisk in action, he never allowed the grass to grow under his feet.

Though semi-literate, and possessed a mere 'rule o'thumb knowledge' of things, Alauddin Khalji handled the administrative problems with an air of professional competence. His economic reforms, involving the fixation of prices, control of the markets and rationing of the consumers' goods, though not based on very scientific principles, were certain unique contributions, envisaged by him far ahead of the times.

An excellent judge of human character, Alauddin had the knack of selecting the right men for the right jobs and knew how to get the maximum out of them. He established peace and order in his dominions and provided much-needed security to his subjects. He tamed the services, suppressed the bureaucratic evils of indiscipline, corruption and bribery ; none but the most honest and efficient officials had the chance of survival under the vigilant eyes of the imperial reporters and spies.

Alauddin Khalji secularised politics and, in an attempt to strengthen his autocratic rule, crippled the power of the nobility and feudal aristocracy. He oppressed the high-ups but provided great relief to the common man ; during his reign, the prices of goods were low, the food stuffs and other necessaries of life were available easily and in abundance. Hoarding, blackmarketing, and cheating by the business community, and exploitation by the middlemen was heard of no more. The roads were safe to travel, and the rule of law prevailed in every nook and corner of the *sultanate*. Alauddin's wealth and military prowess were never equalled by any other ruler of India during the early medieval period; the *sultanate* never flourished so much as in his reign.

In certain matters of land reforms, military organisation and socio-economic policies, Alauddin Khalji anticipated Sher Shah

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Sur ; his administrative set-up carried the seeds of a progressive and secular state, which, given the peace and stability for two or three generations more, could have ushered in an era of peace and prosperity, and advanced the progress of the country by at least two centuries.

But this was not to be. Alauddin Khalji was not an innovator in the field of administration ; he took personal interest in the administrative affairs and made the government click, *albeit* he was not a genius like Sher Shah Sur and Akbar who could effect structural changes in the civil administration in order to make it more stable and enduring. His was an autocratic rule, in which all the strings of state power and policy were concentrated in his own hands ; its successful functioning depended entirely on the physical and mental health of the sultan. The year 1312 marked the zenith of his power and glory ; the sultan was at the helm of affairs, maintained his balance of mind and held a firm grip over the machinery of the state. Thereafter, he began to show marked deterioration in his physique and in the sharpness of his intellect. To his great misfortune, he had neglected the education and training of his children, none of whom was competeen enough to give him a helping hand in piloting the ship of the state while he was still alive, and shoulder the responsibilities of governing such a mighty empire after his death as his worthy successor. Wtih the advancement of his age, he became infirm and ill-tempered. The cunning fox of his youthful days, Alauddin fell a victim to his ownunscrupulous and suspicious nature ; he did not trust his old, experienced and faithful officers ; so much so, he mistrusted even the *malika i jahan* and his own children. He, therefore, failed to utilise their individual or collective services for the long-range benefit of the state. There was no dearth of talent and goodwill to uphold the honour, dignity, integrity and stability of the state. A galaxy of brilliant administrators, military generals and public men were at his beck and call ; nevertheless, the sultan simply failed to call them to his aid when it was most needed. Instead, relying too much on his personal whims and, plagued by his defective judgement, he paid scant regard to them, ill-treated them and brushed them aside so that none dared to come forward with a sober advice to the sultan. Nature had, however, pre-ordained that such a faithless and selfish man should ultimately bring about his own fall and the ruin of his family as well as the empire at the hands of one of his own creatures ; it was Malik Kafur who was to play this inglorious role. As a matter of fact, Alauddin's personal attachment to Malik Kafur and his ill-treatment of the chief queen and the children, including the crown prince, amounted to a performance totally unworthy of a great sovereign, for which the sultan had to pay very heavily. He fell seriously ill when Kafur had gone away to Devagiri to suppress the revolt of Singhanadeva. Because of the ill-temper of the sultan, his chief queen and Khizer Khan, the crown prince, neglected him ; perhaps they did not dare to be

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in constant attendance upon him. Malik Kafur at Devagiri and at Gujarat received the distress calls from the sultan; Alp Khan hastened to the capital while Malik Kafur marked his time and returned after some hesitation. By this time, the sultan had been totally incapacitated from attending to the active business of the state; he left the reins of government in the hands of Malik Kafur as the prime minister (*wazir*) as well as the deputy sultan (*malik naib*). It afforded an opportunity to Malik Kafur to play the role of a king-maker and devise sinister plans to extirpate the royal line. The sultan 'blindly supported him in every impolitic and tyrannical measure'.[147] Kafur poisoned the ears of Alauddin against *malika i jahan*; he charged that the chief queen and her accomplices, including Alp Khan, had conspired against the sultan's life. Much against his will, the ailing sultan was compelled to issue orders for the imprisonment of his two sons Khizer Khan and Shadi Khan in the fort of Gwalior while their mother, the *malika i jahan*, was made captive in the old fort of Delhi. Alp Khan and his younger brother Nizamuddin were put to death through the treachery of Kafur. These unhappy developments disgusted the nobles and spread panic and discontent among the people. The rajputs of Chittor turned out the imperial armies from their territories and asserted their independence. The murder of Alp Khan triggered off a revolt in Gujarat; the rebels gave a crushing defeat to the imperial army which was sent there to restore law and order. Harpala Deva, the son-in-law of the deceased *raja* Ram Chandra Deva of Devagiri stirred up the people of the south to arms against the khalji imperialism; a number of muslim garrisons were expelled by the rebels from the Deccan. When Alauddin Khalji was apprised of the situation, he went almost mad, fretted and fumed and 'bit his own flesh with fury'. His grief and rage only tended to aggravate his illness 'which seemed to resist the power of medicine'.[148] He breathed his last sometime in January 1316; a day before his death, he had physically collapsed and lay unconscious with his red tongue stuck up between his swollen cheeks; there is a great likelihood that he had been administered a slow poison by his ungrateful slave, Malik Kafur.

End of the Khalji Dynasty

Malik Kafur intended to usurp the throne. He brushed aside the claims of about half a dozen grown-up children of Alauddin and placed Shihabuddin Umar, a six-year old son of the deceased sultan from his maratha wife (the daughter of Ram Chandra Deva of Devagiri) on the throne; he himself became the *de facto* ruler in his capacity as the regent. As if to add insult to the injury, Kafur married the mother of the infant sultan though it was universally

147. Firishta (Briggs), I, p. 216.
148. *ibid.*, p. 219.

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known that he was a eunuch. He began to exercise the imperial powers arrogantly, and 'with all the excesses' of the late sultan Alauddin. Khizer Khan and Shadi Khan were blinded and kept in confinement along with their mother, the ex-*malika i jahan*, in the fort of Gwalior; Mubarak Khan, another youthful son of Alauddin was also imprisoned in the fort of Siri (Delhi). Kafur's wickedness tempted him 'to remove all the children and wives of the late sultan, all the nobles and slaves who had claims upon the throne, and to fill their places with creatures of his own'.[149] Though a capable and experienced administrator, he alienated the Alai nobles by his tyrannical and 'unbecoming' conduct. He hired a few *paiks*—the slave guards (foot-soldiers) of the late sultan, to take out the eyes of Mubarak Khan, but the latter won over their sympathies by a compassionate appeal from within his prison. Therefore, instead of blinding the prince, they pounced upon Malik Kafur in his sleeping apartment at the dead of night and did a short work of him. This incident took place thirty-five days after the death of Alauddin Khalji.[150]

The death of Malik Kafur sent a wave of jubilation and relief among the Alai nobles and the populace of Delhi. Prince Mubarak Khan was liberated and asked to take charge of the government as regent on behalf of the child sultan Shihabuddin Umar. Mubarak Khan conducted himself with caution and dignity and won over the confidence of the Alai nobles. Accordingly, after about two months of regency, he was installed the sultan with the title of Qutubuddin Mubarak Shah; at that time, he was seventeen or eighteen years old. His coronation was celebrated with great pomp and show amidst the rejoicings of people. Shihabuddin was placed in confinement at Gwalior.

Mubarak Shah ruled for about four years (1317-20), the first two years of his reign were quite eventful. The severe penal code of Alauddin Khalji was relaxed and the economic regulations scrapped. *Jagir* system was revived. The old grandees of the empire rallied round the young sultan and helped him in the restoration of law and order though for a shortwhile. Gujarat was recovered from the hands of the rebels (1316 A.D.). Harpala Deva was defeated, taken captive and flayed alive (1318); the kingdom of Devagiri was declared annexed to the *sultanate* and placed under a muslim gover nor.

As luck would have it, the things began to take a turn for the worse soon afterwards. The liberal policy, adopted initially by Mubarak Shah to win the sympathies of some, produced adverse effects on the state administration in the long run. The

149. Barani, *Tarikh*, *op. cit*; p. 209.
150. *ibid.*, p. 210.

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prices of goods shot up, the business community reasserted itself and threw the entire state economy out of gear; the bureaucracy became corrupt and irresponsible, and the nobles began to show signs of arrogance and disaffection. Ignorant of the intricacies of administration, Mubarak Shah turned out to be an incapable and weak ruler. The men of low tastes and loose morals clustered around him as his favourites and exploited his royal position and purse for the fulfilment of their base desires; they gradually dragged the young sultan into an ease-loving life of sensual pleasures and debauchery. Some of them received promotions to the high ranks; they mismanaged the affairs and, instead of adding to the strength of the sultan, earned the displeasure of the old nobles. The sultan showered special favours on one of his slave boys, Khusrau Khan, a hindu convert, with whom he had developed compromising personal relations;[151] he was raised to the status of the *wazir*, *malik naib* as well as the commander-in-chief. The sultan left the entire work of government in the hands of Khusrau Khan and 'gave himself up entirely to wine, revelry and lust'[152]; Khusrau Khan deliberately pushed him into a life of dissipation. Mubarak Shah overthrew all decency and royal dignity to the winds and sometimes appeared in the court in a state of drunkenness, accompanied by the dancing girls and vulgar slave boys who misbehaved with the courtiers and put everyone to shame. It shocked the well-wishers of the throne and spread wide discontent among the nobility. A couple of revolts by the disaffected nobles were suppressed, *albeit* the discovery of a conspiracy to kill the sultan swung him into violent action against his own people. The conspirators, their associates and children were all put to death. Khizer Khan, Shadi Khan, Shihabuddin Umar and other princes of the royal blood were murdered in cold blood; Mubarak Shah did not spare even his own father-in-law, Zafar Khan who was liquidated on a mere suspicion. By his foolhardy and atrocious conduct, the sultan deprived himself of his own well-wishers, lost goodwill and confidence of the nobility, and placed himself entirely at the mercy of his creature—the *malik naib* Khusrau Khan. The latter treacherously put his master to death on April 20, 1320 and brought the imperial line of Alauddin Khalji to an inglorious end. He ascended the throne with the title of Nasiruddin Khusrau Shah.

Khusrau Shah, in order to strengthen his claim to the throne, put all the surviving male members of Alauddin's family to death. He let loose a reign of terror to overawe the nobility into submission but met with a rebuff from the provincial governors. Ghazi Malik (later

151. Barani writes that sultan Mubarak Shah's infatuation for this infamous and traitorous Parwari (a low caste Rajput) exceeded that of Alauddin for Malik Naib Kafur.
—*Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; *op. cit*; p. 215.

152. Firishta (Briggs) I, p. 221.

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Ghiasuddin Tughluq, the founder of the Tughluq dynasty), the governor of Dipalpur (Punjab) refused to recognise him as the sultan, and rallied all the disaffected nobles under his banner. He marched upon Delhi to avenge the wrong done to the Alai family; Khusrau Shah was defeated and killed on Septemcer 6, 1320; his reign lasted four months and a half. Thus within five years of Alauddin's death, all of his descendants, kinsmen and their associates were wiped out from the face of the earth.

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7

Tughluq Dynasty

1: Ghiasuddin Tughluq Shah (1320—1325)

Ghazi Malik ascended the throne of Delhi in September 1320, styled as sultan Ghiasuddin Tughluq Shah, and laid the foundations of what came to be known as the tughluq dynasty. The word tughluq is of obscure origin; it was not the name of any clan or tribe. According to Firishta, the father of Ghazi Malik was a turkish slave of Ghiasuddin Balban; his personal name was 'Qutlugh' which was 'vulgarised' into 'Tughluq'.[1] Ibn Battuta informs us that Tughluq belonged to the qarauna tribe of the turks who lived in the mountainous region, lying between Sind and Turkistan.[2] It has been established that the term 'qarauna' was used, during that age, for the people of a mixed race—the descendants of mongol or turkish fathers and non-turkish mothers.[3]

Nothing is known about the life history of Tughluq except that he had married a jat woman from the vicinity of Lahore, and that they had three sons—Ghazi Tughluq, Rajab and Abu Bakr. Ghazi Tughluq started his career as an ordinary trooper during the reign of Jalaluddin Khalji. He was on the personal staff of Ulugh Khan, the younger brother of sultan Alauddin Khalji. He served his master in Sind and Multan and won recognition for his martial

1. John Briggs, *History of the Rise of the Mohammedan Power in India Till the Year* A.D. *1612*; Translated from the Original Persian of Mahomed Kasim Firishta; 4 vols; (London, 1829), Indian reprint, Calcutta, 1966; I, pp. 229-30.
2. Mahdi Husain, *The Rehla of Ibn Battuta* (India, Maldive Islands and Ceylon);—Translation and Commentary; Baroda, 1953; p. 47.
3. For details refer to:
   Mahdi Husain, *Tughluq Dynasty* (Containing a revised and enlarged edition of the *Rise and Fall of Muhammad bin Tughluq*), Calcutta, 1963; pp. 57-60; & *Comp. HI*, V, p. 461.

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qualities during the siege of Ranthambhor; he was promoted 'master of the horse' (*amir ul khail*).

After the death of Ulugh Khan, Ghazi Tughluq was taken on the imperial cadre; he won a name for himself in the fight against the mongols and received appointment as governor of Multan and 'warden of the marches'. Ibn Battuta says that he had seen an inscription in the *jama masjid* of Multan, constructed by Ghazi Malik, which recorded :

> I have fought twenty-nine battles with the tatars (mongols) and have defeated them. Hence I have been named Malik ul Ghazi.[4]

At the time of Alauddin's death, Ghazi Malik was governor of Dipalpur. He was one of the most experienced and reputed Alai nobles *albeit* he kept himself aloof from the politics of the imperial court and stuck to his post as faithful servant of the crown irrespective of who wielded power in Delhi. He rendered some diplomatic service to sultan Qutubuddin Mubarak Shah by persuading another prominent Alai noble Ainul Multani to obey the young sultan and proceed to Gujarat as its governor. Ghazi Malik was shocked, however, to hear of the cold-blooded murder of Mubarak Shah and the extirpation of the Alai princes. He refused to recognise Khusrau Khan as the sultan and called upon all the old guards to take up arms against the usurper. Ghazi Malik's son Jauna Khan (later sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq), who held the office of the 'master of the horse' (*amir ul khail*) in Delhi since the days of Mubarak Shah, fled to Dipalpur and so did a couple of other nobles. Ghazi Malik led an attack upon Delhi; the royal army commanded by Hisamuddin, a half-brother of Khusrau Khan, was routed at Sirsa whle Khusrau Khan himself was defeated in a pitched battle fought near Indraprastha. He fled the battle-field and hid himself in a garden of the capital's suburbs but was taken captive and beheaded. Ghazi Malik made a triumphant entry into the capital on September 6, 1320 and offered the throne to the surviving male member of the Alai family, if any. As no male descendant of Alauddin Khalji had been left alive, the victorious nobles unanimously selected Ghazi Malik to be their king. He was coronated on September 7 or 8 amidst great rejoicings of the peple.

Domestic Policy

The *grandees* of the sultanate readily acknowledged Ghiasuddin Tughluq's authority. Advanced in age, the sultan proved a capable and sagacious ruler who took up the task of administration with enthusiasm and a sense of responsibility. According to the tradition, he reconstituted the court and the ministry by inducting

4. I bn Battuta, The Rehla (Mahdi Husain), *op. cit*; p. 51.

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his friends and relations therein; nevertheless he took care to accommodate all the competent and trustworthy nobles by assigning the offices of dignity and status. A few close associates of Khusrau Khan and those who were actually involved in the murder and humiliation of members of the Alai family, were punished; *albeit* the sultan refrained from taking any action against those who had simply tolerated the regime of Khusrau Khan and cooperated with him in the management of the state affairs. Most of the nobles were confirmed in their old assignments. The new entrants included Malik Shadi Khan, the son-in-law of sultan Ghiasuddin, who was put in charge of the *diwan i wazarat*. Two nephews of the sultan, Malik Asaduddin and Malik Bahauddin, became the *naib barbek*—'the deputy grand usher', and *arz i mamalik*—'minister of the army' respectively. A distinguished Alai noble Bahram Aiba was officially addressed as 'brother of the sultan',[5] given the title of Kishlu Khan and appointed governor of Multan and Sind. Malik Tajuddin Jafar was made *naib i arz*—'the deputy minister of the army' and entrusted with the governorship of Gujarat. Kamaluddin, the *qazi ul quzat* (chief justice) was confirmed in his old office and conferred the title of *sadr i jahan*. Shamasuddin received appointment as the *qazi* of Delhi while Malik Burhanuddin was made *kotwal* of Delhi with the title of *alim ul mulk*. The five sons of sultan Ghiasuddin did not receive any specific administrative assignments all at once but were accorded high-sounding titles and dignified status at the court; his eldest son Fakhruddin Muhammad Jauna Khan was conferred the title of Ulugh Khan, and the other princes became known as Bahram Khan, Zafar Khan, Mahmud Khan and Nusrat Khan. Ulugh Khan was declared heir apparent to the throne soon afterwards.

Thus flanked by the best available talent and promising youth of his family, Ghiasuddin set the machinery of central government in motion within a week of his accession to the throne. He declared all the surviving ladies of the Alai family to be under royal protection; the young girls were married to high officials of integrity while the old women were granted adequate pensions. All those who had suffered because of court intrigues and rapid change of regimes, were suitably compensated and rehabilitated. The *jagir* system, as revived by Mubarak Shah, was perpetuated, and even those, who had suffered the confiscation of their lands during the reign of Alauddin Khalji, were given back their estates.

The police administration was reorganised; the provincial governors were issued instructions to bring the areas allocated to them under their effective control and report the general law and order situation to the centre. The department of justice was strengthened by deputing a number of *ulema* to take charge as *qazis*

5. Ghiasuddin's real brothers, Rajab and Abu Bakr, had died before he became the sultan.

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at important towns. A code of law for the civil government was drafted; it was 'founded upon the *Koran*, and consistent with the ancient usages of the Delhi monarchy'.[6] Physical torture in case of economic offences and recovery of debts was given up. The discipline, efficiency and integrity of the services of Alauddin's days could not be restored; nevertheless, Ghiasuddin improved the general tone of administration by imparting to it a bit of soldier's touch, and the police and judicial arrangements made by him won applause from all quarters. The sultan recovered a part of the royal treasure which had been distributed by Khusrau Khan to the leading nobles and aristocracy or plundered by the people; it led to the estrangement of his relations with Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya, the most celebrated and influential *sufi* saint of the times, who had also received a sum of five *lakh tankas* from Khusrau Khan but refused to return it to the exchequer on the ground that he had already given it away in charity.

The sudden collapse of Alauddin's economic regulations had adverse effects on agricultural production and public economy. Ghiasuddin Tughluq attempted to restore economic order and increase agricultural production in his own way. The progressive land revenue system, initiated by Alauddin Khalji, was given a formal burial when Ghiasuddin discarded the measurement of land as the basis for the assessment of government demand. The extensive revenue establishment of the Alai regime was simply unintelligible to him ; its staff was reduced and survey of land became 'a forgotten story'. Nevertheless, Ghiasuddin Tughluq took keen interest in the extension of agriculture by encouraging the cultivators to bring the unreclaimed lands under the plough and re-populate the deserted villages. The state demand was reduced and a principle laid that the land revenue should not be enhanced 'whether upon the reports of informers or the statements of valuers' by more than one-eleventh of the estimated produce at a time. The sultan was conscious of the fact that

> countries are ruined, and are kept in poverty by excessive taxation and the exorbitant demands of kings.[7]

The oppressive methods adopted by Alauddin Khalji for the collection of revenue were given up ; on the other hand, the revenue officials were issued the instructions that

> the revenue should be collected in such a way that the *raiyats* should increase their cultivation; that the lands already in cultivation might be kept so, and some little be added to them every year. So much was not to be exacted at once that the cultivation should fall off and no increase be made in future.[8]

6. Firishta (Briggs), I, p. 231.
7. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 230.
8. *ibid.*

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Ghiasuddin Tughluq took interest in the construction of canals for irrigation; the peasants were given relief in times of drought. The sympathetic attitude of the sultan towards the cultivators helped in the rehabilitation of the countryside and increased the agricultural production. The sultan improved the means of communication by clearing and levelling the roads which had been neglected since the death of Alauddin Khalji; he revived the postal services of Alauddin Khalji's regime, repaired the forts, constructed bridges, laid out gardens and initiated other works of public utility. All these measures restored the credit of the government among the people and 'inspired' Amir Khusrau to sing the praise of sultan Ghiasuddin Tughluq in the following words :

> He never did anything that was not replete
> with wisdom and sense;
> He might be said to wear a hundred doctors'
> hoods under his crown.[9]

Foreign Policy

The vast empire of Alauddin Khalji had shown signs of disintegration during the closing days of his reign; its outlying provinces and the vassal hindu chiefs revolted with various degrees of results, under his weak successors. Ghiasuddin Tughluq, being a capable military general, made up his mind to get back as much of the lost territories into the fold of the sultanate as possible. In 1321, the crown prince Jauna Khan, now styled Ulugh Khan, led an army to subjugate Pratap Rudra Deva II of Telingana who had stopped the payment of tribute to Delhi after the death of Alauddin. The fort of Warangal was besieged. The *rai* was hardpressed to offer submission on the old terms, *albeit* Jauna Khan demanded unconditional surrender and pressed the siege with full force. As luck would have it, the guerilla fighters of Telengana cut off the communications of the imperial army with Delhi. The 'want of intelligence from the court' and the intrigues of some malicious camp-followers of Jauna Khan, who intended to harm the interests of the crown prince, led to the spread of false rumours among the troops, including the one about the death of sultan Ghiasuddin Tughluq. Faced with desertions from the rank and file, and harassed by the fighters of Telengana, Jauna Khan retreated to Devagiri with heavy losses in men and material. He came to know of the true picture while at Devagiri and rushed to the capital to offer apologies to the sultan. The prince was pardoned and the mischief-mongers and traitors from among his associates, primarily responsible for this debacle, were beheaded.

9. Quoted by Barani, *ibid.*
Amir Khusrau received a pension of 1,000 *tankas* per mensem from sultan Ghiasuddin Tughluq; both of them died in 1325.

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The second expedition to Telengana was led by Jauna Khan after considerable preparation in 1323 *via* Bihar. A part of Bihar was annexed *en route* to the fort of Warrangal, which was besieged once again. The *rai*, after a brief resistance, laid down arms; he was sent with his family to Delhi and his kingdom declared annexed to the sultanate. The city of Warrangal, now named as Sultanpur, was made a provincial capital while the territory of Telengana was parcelled out into small districts and distributed among the turkish nobles. On his way back to Delhi, Jauna Khan attacked and subjugated the hindu principality of Utkala (Jajnagar of the muslim chroniclers) in Orissa, and returned to the capital with many war elephants and a huge booty.

The imperial army had not yet returned from the south after the conquest of Telengana when the intelligence was received about the appearance of mongols on the Indus. Malik Shadi was sent with a royal army to reinforce the border contingents at Samana. The mongols were defeated and annihilated in two separate actions and their leaders brought in chains to Delhi. Obviously this success was made possible because of the vigilant and highly efficient military organisation and mobility of the royal cavalry. It bespeaks of the excellent contribution made by Ghiasuddin towards the reorganisation of the royal army within a couple of years so that it could effectively pursue the twofold task of annexations and the defence of the northwest frontier against foreign invasions simultaneously. Ghiasuddin followed in the footprints of Alauddin Khalji in this regard; he enforced strong discipline among the soldiers and kept them fighting fit, their descriptive rolls being taken and horses branded regularly.

After the repulsion of the mongol invasion, Malik Shadi was despatched for the conquest of Gujarat which had been totally cut off from Delhi after the murder of sultan Mubarak Shah Khalji. Malik Shadi failed in this enterprise and was murdered by the rebels through a stratagem; the imperial army returned to the capital empty-handed. The untimely death of his son-in-law, a brilliant administrator and military officer, shocked the sultan but did not dishearten him in the pursuit of his imperial policy. About this time, he made up his mind to intervene in the affairs of Bengal which had become independent under Bughra Khan, the second son of Balban; Lakhnauti was his seat of governance. Alauddin Khalji had not been able to extend his control over Bengal. Its ruler Shamasuddin Firoze Shah, a descendant of Bughra Khan, died in 1322, leaving behind four sons who indulged in a fratricidal war for the occupation of the throne. One of them, Nasiruddin, appealed to Delhi for help against his own brother, also named Ghiasuddin Bahadur, who was in occupation of Lakhnauti. It was too big a temptation to be spurned; the sultan left Delhi in the charge of a council of regency, headed by the crown prince, and himself marched upon Bengal with a magnificent army, the kind of which

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he had never led before in any expedition. He was joined by the fugitive prince Nasiruddin near Tirhut (Mithila). The sultan ordered his second son Bahram Khan to launch an attack on Lakhnauti with the assistance of Nasiruddin. Lakhnauti was conquered and its ruler Ghiasuddin taken prisoner. Thereafter, the whole of Bengal was overrun by the imperial army. Nasiruddin was installed at Lakhnauti as a vassal cheif while the eastern part of Bengal was annexed to the sultanate. The conquest of Bengal was a great military achievement of sultan Ghiasuddin Tughluq, who did one better than even Alauddin Khalji on the eastern front.

The crown prince Jauna Khan held a grand reception for the monarch at Afghanpur in the vicinity of Delhi on the triumphant return of the imperial army from Bengal. The wooden pavilion under which the sultan was received and entertained to a gala party, collapsed suddenly when the elephants, brought from Bengal as trophies of war, marched past the venue; and the sultan, along with five or six other dignitaries including prince Mahmud Khan, were crushed to death under the debris. On the testimony of Ibn Battuta, some hold the crown prince guilty of a conspiracy to kill his father; they argue that the building was so designed as to fall when touched in a certain part by the elephants. Barani and Firishta, however, opine that the fall of the pavilion was a mere accident.

Ghiasuddin Tughluq was a saviour of the turkish sultanate of Delhi, then imperial government of India, so laboriously carved out by Alauddin Khalji by the forcible integration of the tribal and regional states. Ghiasuddin gave a new lease of life to it and founded the second and the last turkish imperial dynasty of early medieval India after the khaljis. He was a successful ruler who restored law and order and won the confidence of the aristocracy and the masses by his moderate yet firm administrative policies. He generated liberal tendencies in civil administration and worked sincerely for the happiness and prosperity of his subjects according to the religious and moral standards of his times. A man of character and integrity, he was free from all the princely vices of his age; he abstained from sensual pleasures and performed his royal functions with a sense of duty.

A comparison is sometimes made between Jalaluddin Khalji and Ghiasuddin Tughluq, the founders of the two greatest turkish dynasties of early medieval India. Both of them were called upon to protect the sultanate from threatened disintegration at the decline of the preceding ruling houses. Both of them belonged to the category of unprivileged muslims and rose by dint of hardwork and merit. They were advanced in age when they voluntarily responded to the call of times; both of them had rendered commendable service to the earlier regimes, particularly as wardens of the marches. Both

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of them were seasoned soldiers and had many brilliant victories to their credit. None of them was ambitious or power-hungry; each of them ruled with moderation and strove for the happiness and welfare of his subjects. They ruled for about five years each and both of them died an unnatural death. In spite of all these points of similarity between the two, Ghiasuddin Tughluq stands head and shoulders above Jalaluddin Khalji as conqueror, empire-builder and administrator. Ghiasuddin was full of energy and enthusiasm when he undertook the task of governance; his period of rule was strong, virile, eventful and memorable, before which the weak, imbecile and supine reign of Jalaluddin Khalji pales into insignificance.

2: Muhammad bin Tughluq
1325—1351

Fakhruddin Muhammad Jauna Khan, the eldest son of Ghiasuddin Tughluq, ascended the throne at Tughluqabad—the fortified residence of his deceased father and 'the third city of Delhi',[10] without any opposition. He proceeded from Tughluqabad to old Delhi forty days later and his coronation ceremony was held amidst great rejoicings at the 'red palace' of Balban which had been renovated by the orders of the new sultan. His accession was hailed by all the people, high and low, hindus as well as muslims, who 'invoked blessings' on him and 'sang his praises'.[11] He ruled for twenty-six years.

Muhammad bin Tughluq was the most highly educated of all the preceding sultans of Delhi. A scholar of Persian and Arabic, he was well-read in the subjects of astronomy, philosophy, mathematics, medicine and logic. He knew by heart a great deal of Persian poetry, understood it well and, in his conversation, frequently quoted Persian verses; he was a good calligraphist too.[12] Being the

10. The 'slave' sultans constructed 'the first city of Delhi (Dilli) with Qutub Minar as its nucleus; Alauddin Khalji built 'the second city' at Siri, which stood to the east of the Qutub complex. Ghiasuddin Tughluq constructed a well-protected fort-like township 'Tughluqabad' to accommodate royal palaces, central secretariat and the treasury; it constituted 'the third city of Delhi'.—Refer to Gordon Hearn, *The Seven Cities of Delhi*, London, 1906.

11. For detailed study refer to Mahdi Husain, *The Rise and Fall of Muhammad bin Tughluq*; London, 1938; & *Tughluq Dynasty*; *op. cit.* Also, Ishwari Prasad, *History of the Qaraunah Turks*; Allahabad, 1936.

12. Barani writes:

> The excellence of his handwriting; the ease of his composition, the sublimity of his style, and the play of his fancy, left the most accomplished teachers and professors far behind..., No learned or scientific man or scribe, or poet, or wit, or physician, could have had

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son of a 'warden of the marches', Muhammad bin Tughluq had received excellent military training; he started his career as a soldier. He was promoted 'master of the horse' by sultan Mubarak Shah Khalji and confirmed in the assignment by Khusrau Shah, *albeit* he deserted the latter and joined hands with his father in bringing about the fall of Khusrau Shah. As crown prince, with the exalted title of Ulugh Khan, he led the imperial forces to Telengana and, in the second attempt, not only humbled its ruler but also annexed the kingdom of Warrangal to the sultanate. His ambitions soared high when he ascended the throne and the people also expected great things from him as a monarch for he was 'not less famous for his gallantry in the field than for those accomplishments which render a man the ornament of private society'.[13] He was a man of high moral character and led an austere life like his illustrious father; a *sunni musalman*, he was regular at his daily prayers and abstained frome drinking in public.

The reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq started with everything in his favour. He succeeded a capable monarch who had enjoyed the confidence of his people. He inherited a vast empire from his illustrious father, to the consolidation of which, he had personally made substantial contribution. Peace and tranquillity prevailed in the sultanate, the distant provinces were under the effective control of the centre, and the royal treasury was full to the brim. With these assets, the youthful and energetic monarch was expected to do better than the earlier sultans of Delhi. Muhammad bin Tughluq was fully conscious of the supreme powers and resources wielded by him; he was rather over confident of his capabilities to make use of these as a sovereign. He was an abstract thinker and an innovator in the field of state polity *albeit* he was an idealist, and not a practical statesman; therefore, the radical changes brought about by him in the state policy foundered against the rocks of improbability. Like Alauddin Khalji, he was a great imperialist who was eager to extend his sway over the whole of the Indian subcontinent. He believed in the geopolitical entity of India and the oneness of its people; and had a clear concept about the political unity of the country. He wanted to break the barriers between the North and the South, and stood for the extension of direct administrative control of the central government over all parts of India by eliminating the regional states and feudal principalities. He threw open higher services to all the Indians on merit and did not discriminate between the hindus and the muslims in matters of state policy. In his political outlook, Muhammad bin Tughluq was unique

the presumption to argue with him about his own special pursuit, nor would he have been able to maintain his position against the throtting arguments of the sultan.

—*Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; *op. cit*; p. 236.

13. Firishta (Briggs), I, p. 236.

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among the sultans of Delhi; he was definitely a man with ideas far ahead of his times.

Accordingly, Muhammad bin Tughluq has been 'represented by contemporaries as one of the wonders of the age in which he lived'.[14] Of all the sultans of Delhi, he is perhaps the most grossly misunderstood monarch. It is a pity that we possess no official records of his reign, and the only source of true information, his autobiography, is meagre and insufficient. His lofty designs and his ambitious projects were beyond the comprehension of the bureaucracy as well as the subjects. Barani, Ibn Battuta and Isami could not understand him either; no wonder, they took a prejudiced view of his character and administrative policies. Barani was, in fact, so much obsessed with the 'five ambitious projects' of Muhammad bin Tughluq that he did not care to give a systematic narrative of his reign in chronological order.[15] Again, instead of tracing the genesis of these projects and giving the analysis of the causes leading to their failure, he dwells on their disastrous effects by giving an exaggerated account of the sufferings of the people and the ruthless persecutions of the sultan. So also is the case with the chronicles of Ibn Battuta and Isami. Their record of Muhammad bin Tughluq has, therefore, to be reviewed very carefully.

The Mongol Invasion

Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign synchronises with the re-appearance of mongols on the Indian borders. Alauddin Tarmashirin, the chaghatai ruler of Transoxiana, invaded Sind in the beginning of his reign, before his 'government was settled'. On the receipt of intelligence from Multan, the sultan made prompt arrangements for the defence of the kingdom and the entire region from Delhi to the *salt range* was transformed into an army camp. According to Isami, the mongols were defeated and repulsed, though Firishta says they were bought off. Tarmashirin and his followers had entered the fold of Islam; Ibn Battuta, before his arrival in Delhi, had stayed at the court of the chaghatai chief at Bukhara for about two months. This was the first and the last foreign invasion that India faced during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq.

The sultan moved upto Lahore and despatched the royal forces to liberate the frontier region from the hands of the mongols. The

14. Firishta (Briggs); I, p. 236.
15. Barani was the most competent man to give a truthful account of Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign; he correctly claims:

> If I were to write a full account of all the affairs of his reign, and of all that passed, with his faults and shortcomings, I should fill many volumes.
>
> —*Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 236.

Unfortunately, he did not do so.

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border towns of Kalanaur and Farashur (Peshwar) were occupied and garrisoned by the state troops.

Early Revolts

Bahauddin Gurshasp, governor of Sagar, raised a standard of revolt in 1326-27; he was an ambitious cousin of Muhammad bin Tughluq (a sister's son of Ghiasuddin Tughluq) who wielded considerable influence in the South. The sultan sent an army under the command of Ahmad Ayaz, entitled *khwaja i jahan*, to deal with the rebel, and himself proceeded to Devagiri so as to exert pressure on the neighbouring chieftains and governors. Gurshasp was defeated in an encounter, which took place somewhere to the south of the Godavari river, and took shelter with the hindu *rai* of Kampila.[16] The fort of Kampila was conquered by the imperial army after two months' siege *albeit* the *rai* and Gurshasp escaped and were given a hot chase by the royal contingents. The *rai* fell fighting at Anegundi (Husdarg) while Gurshasp was captured by another hindu chieftain who professed loyalty to Delhi. He was brought in chains to the sultan who ordered him to be flayed alive. The eleven sons of the *rai* of Kampila embraced Islam and were taken under royal protection; some of them joined the imperial service.

While at Devagiri, the sultan was told that Nag Nayak, the *rana* of Kondhana (mod. Singhgarh, near Poona) did not pay tribute of Delhi. On his orders, the fortress was besieged by a contingent of the royal army; it was defended gallantly by the *rana* and the siege lasted about eight months. The *rana* ultimately submitted and was allowed to retain his estate as an imperial vassal.

Muhammad bin Tughluq was celebrating the victory of Kondhana at Devagiri when he received the intelligence about the rebellious intentions of Bahram Aiba, entitled Kishlu Khan, the viceroy of Multan, Uchh and Sind. He had expressed resentment against the inhuman and disgraceful treatment meted out to Gurshasp and his associates. The sultan rushed back to Delhi and, after making adequate preparations, marched upon Multan at the head of a vast army. Kishlu Khan was defeated and killed in an action fought near Abohar. The sultan made a triumphant entry into Multan and granted general pardon to its inhabitants on the intervention of Shaikh Ruknuddin Multani. The successful handling of all these rebellions enhanced the prestige of the sultan and strengthened the hold of the imperial government over the distant provinces.

16. Kampila or Kampili—a town in the Tunghbhadra valley, situated at a distance of about ten miles from the ruins of Vijayanagar. The hindu principality of Kampila also included within its fold the districts of Raichur and Dharwar.

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Transfer of the Capital (1326-27)

The first[17] grand project, conceived by Muhammad bin Tughluq, was to transfer his capital from Delhi to Devagiri, which was renamed Daulatabad. What was foremost in the mind of the sultan, when he thought of such a move, cannot be ascertained from the contemporary sources. This is, however, a fact that Muhammad bin Tughluq, while as crown prince Jauna Khan, had formed close associations with the Deccan. He led two expeditions to Warrangal and, after his hard-earned victory, annexed the hindu kingdom to the sultanate. But for the keen interest taken by Ghiasuddin Tughulq and the victory scored by Jauna Khan, the whole of southern peninsula might have slipped out of the control of the newly established tughluq dynasty. After his accession to the throne, Muhammad bin Tughluq faced the first revolt at the hands of Bahauddin Gurshasp, governor of Sagar, who had developed contacts with some hindu feudal chiefs of the Deccan. The sultan was constrained to shift his headquarters temporarily to Devagiri to deal with the situation; a little carelessness or weakness on his part could have triggered off rebellions in other parts of the peninsula. With this background in view, we can enumerate the plausible considerations which might have led Muhammad bin Tughluq to transfer his capital to Daulatabad. The sultan was a man of ideas who did not hesitate to break the old traditions and conventions in statecraft and civil administration. As a great visionary, he believed in the political unity of the Indian subcontinent and desired to bring the entire country under the effective control of a central authority. He wished the sultanate to play this grandiose role as a unifying force. Delhi was situated far away from the South which tempted the feudal chieftains and governors of the latter to defy the imperial authority. His first Warrangal expedition (1321-22) had failed simply because of the fact that his communications with Delhi were cut off for a couple of weeks which resulted in the spread of rumours and disaffection among his soldiers. Muhammad bin Tughluq did not want such a mishap to be repeated again. Since the conquest of southern India by Malik Kafur under Alauddin Khalji and the inflow of its wealth lubricating the wheels of the sultanate, the centre of gravity of the Indian politics had definitely shifted to the South. Muhammad bin Tughluq attached greater importance to his southern possessions than the Punjab and Sind which had been ravaged by a century of mongol inroads.[18] Muhammad bin Tughluq was eager to utilise the immense gold, silver, precious stones and untapped resources of the South to enrich the sultanate. While at Devagiri, he was fascinated with the

17. Barani marks it as the second project, preceded by 'taxation in the Doab', which is chronologically wrong.
18. Gardner Brown, quoted in Mahdi Husain, Tughluq Dynasty, *op. cit*; p. 145.

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pleasant climate, rich agricultural products and flourishing trade and commerce of Maharashtra where his stay must have been made much more comfortable than at Delhi by the hospitality of the maratha officials of the sultanate.

Barani offers the only explanation in support of the sultan's project that Daulatabad 'held a central situation'.[19] Firishta, though writing long afterwards, makes an observation :

> The king was so much pleased with the situation and strength of Dewgur (Devagiri) and considered it so much more centrical than Dehly (Delhi), that he determined to make it his capital.[20]

Devagiri was in no way situated in the heart of Muhammad bin Tughluq's empire; it was not equidistant from the northwestern, eastern and southern boundaries of the sultanate. If the sultan attributed a 'central' position to Devagiri, it could be justified only when he attached little importance to his dominions situated to the east and northwest of Delhi. Of course, Delhi being located close to the northwestern frontier of India, was frequently exposed to the foreign invasions whereas Devagiri was free from this menace; the latter enjoyed a more strategic location and could be defended better. We need not believe Ibn Battuta when he says that the sultan wanted to punish the people of Delhi because they used to write anonymous letters full of abuse to him.[21] Similarly, Isami's contention that the sultan distrusted the people (*khalq*) of Delhi and wanted to break their power by uprooting them from their hearths and homes, is not very rational unless we define the people to be the nobility or aristocracy of the capital. The political environment of Delhi in the beginning of Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign does not warrant such an inference.

A modern historiographer, on the testimony of *Siyarul Auliya*, opines that sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq intended to 'solve the Deccan problem' by making Devagiri 'a centre of muslim culture' through the plantation of 'a colony of the musalmans' there. He observes :

> One of the factors controlling the situation in the Deccan was the scarcity of the musalmans—a fact which made it so tempting to the hindu rulers to revolt, and so difficult for the emperor of Delhi immediately to control the situation from so great a distance. At the slightest outbreak of trouble

19. *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 239.
20. (Briggs), I, p. 241.
21. This nasty situation developed after the failure of the sultan's major projects; it could have been the effect rather than the cause of the transfer of the capital.

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in any part of the Deccan, either a capable general had to be sent from Delhi or the emperor himself had to march in person.[22]

The argument does not stand the test of historical investigation. It was not a hindu chief but a prominent muslim noble Bahauddin Gurshasp who, instead of championing the cause of Islamic unity on behalf of the sultanate, had raised the first standard of revolt against Muhammad bin Tughluq. The feudal hindu chiefs and ambitious muslim nobles stood at par with one another in the matter of defying the authority of an autocratic police state the sultanate of Delhi was. Muhammad bin Tughluq was not a communalist but an imperialist with a clearer political vision than what was possessed by the other sultans of Delhi. His failure as a ruler need not distract us from the real aims and objects that underlay his Deccan policy. The increase in the numerical strength of muslims and the spread of Islamic culture in the South was the indirect result of his move which was political in nature.

Firishta has it on record that 'on proposing this subject to his ministers, the majority were of the opinion that Oojein (Ujjain) was a more proper place for that purpose'.[23] As an autocratic and self-willed ruler, however, Muhammad bin Tughluq brushed aside the advice of his ministers and 'without carefully looking into the advantages and disadvantages on every side',[24] decided to transfer the capital to Daulatabad. No wonder, he had to pay a heavy price for having disregarded the advice of the counsellors.

The 'exodus' to Daulatabad took place in two phases. At first, the imperial court and establishment shifted to the new capital. The nobles moved but grudgingly while the cream of the aristocracy, comprising the *saiyyids*, *shaikhs*, *ulema*, traders and businessmen showed disinclination to vacate the historic city of Delhi 'which for 170 or 180 years, had grown in prosperity and rivalled Baghdad and Cairo'.[25] This enraged the sultan who issued orders for the general migration of the aristocracy of Delhi to Daulatabad; the incident took place about a year after the first phase of migration. Isami says that six caravans were composed of the people who were forced to move to the Deccan against their will; the step was deeply resented by the aristocracy and made the sultan an object of hatred and despise by all and sundry. It was not, however, a mass migration of the populace of Delhi; the hindus in general were not affected by it nor were the muslim masses compelled to take the road to the South. It were essentially the upper classes of Delhi who fell a victim to

22. Mahdi Husain, *Tughluq Dynasty*, p. 144.
23. (Briggs), I, p. 241.
24. Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 239.
25. *ibid.*

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the whims of the despotic ruler; they were uprooted from their ancestral land, many of whom suffered great hardships and some were actually ruined. Coercion was employed against those who disobeyed the sultan's orders; some were mercilessly dragged out of their homes and punished. However, the harrowing tales of mass migration as narrated by Barani, Ibn Battuta, and Isami, etc., are not literally correct; these became current among the people as an expression of the sentiments of resentment and disgust against the highhanded action of the sultan. The city of Delhi was not evacuated completely, *albeit*, on being deprived of its royal patrons and aristocracy, it lost its former pomp, grandeur and prosperity.

Once the decision had been taken, the sultan made elaborate arrangements to execute the plan. The seven hundredmile long trunk road (shahrah) between Delhi and Devagiri had already been well-developed since the days of Alauddin Khalji. Halting camps were set up all along the route for the stay of the emigrants where free food, drinking water and other amenities were made available for them. An efficient postal and intelligence service was established and state troops posted *en route* to Daulatabad to protect the life and property of the travellers. Ibn Battuta reveals that the sultan had purchased all the houses and dwellings of those who were asked to shift to the South; they were provided free board and lodging on arrival in Daulatabad and granted free land and other facilities for the construction of their houses and business concerns. Barani has it that 'the sultan was bounteous in his liberality and favours to the emigrants both on their journey and on their arrival' at Daulatabad. Notwithstanding all that the sultan had done to help the emigrants, they suffered tremendously from severe mental strain, privation and fatigue.[26]

Daulatabad did not prove an ideal capital for the vast turkish empire of India. Delhi as the imperial capital did have some shortcomings, and the original idea of locating a more centrally situated headquarters was not illogical; *albeit* the choice of Devagiri was wrong. It did not fulfil the requirements which necessitated this change. Being situated far away from the north-western frontier and Bengal, it could not serve as an adequate base for the establishment of an effective control over northwestern and eastern India. To his great chagrin, Muhammad bin Tughluq had to move like a

26. To quote Barani,

> Many, from the toil of the long journey, perished on the road, and those who arrived at Deogir, could not endure the pain of exile. In despondency, they pined to death. All along Deogir, which is an infidel land, there sprang up graveyards of musalmans.
>
> —*ibid.*

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shuttle cock between Delhi and Daulatabad to solve the various administrative and political problems.

The historic importance of Delhi could not be reduced by an executive action alone. Delhi was associated with the foundation of the sultanate and had enjoyed reputation as its metropolis throughout the muslim world for over two centuries. Muhammad bin Tughluq realised this bitter truth only after he had shifted to Daulatabad. Moreover, in spite of the liberal patronage extended by the sultan to the emigrants, many of them did not feel at home in the South; their emotional and sentimental attachment with Delhi could not be cut off. They felt themselves as strangers in an 'infidel land' and continued to grumble against the sultan who had lost their confidence and goodwill; they came to constitute a permanently disgruntled and disaffected lot who did not cooperate with the sultan willingly and sincerely in the management of the state affairs. It had an adverse effect on the administration and gave a serious setback to the dignity and prestige of the sultan. Within two or three years, Muhammad bin Tughluq realised his folly and brought back the imperial court to Delhi without any fanfare. General permission was granted to the emigrants to come back to Delhi in 1335-36 but, much before that stage, Delhi had already become the hub of political and socio-cultural activities of the sultanate once again. Ibn Battuta who came to Delhi in 1334 found it in a fairly flourishing condition.

Abbas, the author of *Masalik ul Absar*, an Arabic work, compiled about a decade after the so-called evacuation and destruction of Delhi, mentions that the sultanate of Delhi had two capitals—Delhi and Devagiri or Qubbatul Islam, 'the metropolis of Islam'. The two cities were connected with each other by a broad and well-maintained highway. All along the route, the sultan had placed huge beating drums at hundreds of the posting stations, situated at short distances from each other. Whenever something special happened in a city or when the gates of the capital, where the sultan was not present, were opened in the morning and closed at night, the drums were beaten in rapid succession from posting station to posting station. In this manner, the sultan came to know every day the time of the opening and closing of the gates of the capital lying at a distance of about seven hundred miles from his place of residence.[21] Similarly, the recent discovery of a couple of coins, minted almost simultaneouly at Delhi and Daulatabad, carry the inscriptions on them as *Takhtgah i Delhi* and *Takhtgah i Daulatabad* respectively.[28] Such being the case, we have reasons to believe that the unprecedented project conceived by Muhammad bin Tughluq was not scrapped altogether. The original plan misfired

27. Referred to by Mahdi Husain, *Tughluq Dynasty*, p. 145.
28. *Comp. HI*, V, p. 514.

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and was universally condemned by the people essentially because of its dictatorial implementation; the sultan crippled a wise project by its hasty implementation and the use of brute force therefore. Notwithstanding the personal and autocratic element which constituted but a part of the general nature of medieval Indian monarchical hierarchy, the importance of Daulatabad as the second headquarters of the empire was confirmed by experience, and the original plan was modified to suit the exigencies of the times. The ancient Indian monarchs did have more than one capital to control their vast Indian dominions. Considered from this angle, Muhammad bin Tughluq made a great contribution to the concept of medieval Indian polity, and anticipated the British who started with Calcutta as the capital, situated on the eastern fringe of the country, and subsequently developed Simla to be the second headquarters of their Indian empire.

The immediate effect of Muhammad bin Tughluq's transfer of the capital was disastrous. It reduced the prestige and prosperity of Delhi though for a shortwhile. The aristocracy of Delhi were uprooted from their hearths and homes and many of them put to great inconvenience. The execution of the plan must have put a tremendous strain on the administrative machinery as well as the state treasury. The sultan lost in the estimation of the people and could never win back their confidence all his life. The bad execution of the project therefore, resulted in the greatest personal loss to the sultan. The long-range effects of this experiment proved, however, to be marvellous. The socio-cultural barriers between the North and the Shouth were broken. A large number of the muslim elite migrated to the South and made permanent settlement there; they received lucrative government assignments, free land and estates and gradually came to acquire a dominant position among the aristocracy of the Deccan. The propagation of Islam among the natives received impetus and population of the muslims beyond the Vindhyas increased considerably. Thus the Deccan became a stronghold of the muslims. Whether Muhammad bin Tughluq had originally conceived it or not, he became indirectly responsible for plantation of the muslim faith and Islamic culture in the South. It would not be wrong to say that Alauddin Khalji had carried the muslim arms to the South whereas Muhammad bin Tughluq installed the banner of Islamic religion and culture there. The initial project of the sultan failed and, in the long run, he lost his hold over his southern dominions as well, but the Deccan continued to be the stronghold of muslim power; it led to the birth of the Bahmani kingdom.

Introduction of Token Currency (1330-32)

Introduction of token currency was the second[29] unprecedented project launched by Muhammad bin Tughluq. It is essentially a

29. Barani treats it as project number three.

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modern concept that dose not need much elaboration; we live in the age of token currency where the mere contemplation of the intrinsic value of the contents of paper notes and coins may be dubbed idiotic. Muhammad bin Tughluq, on the other hand, earned the nickname of a 'fool' because he conceived of such an advanced measure to revolutionise the Indian economy in the fourteenth century. He has been described by Edward Thomas as the 'Prince of Moneyers'.[30] Soon after accession, he made sweeping reforms in the system of coinage. He fixed the relative values of the precious metals and issued various types of coins with the object of facilitating exchange and circulation. The introduction of token currency was, however, his most significant innovation in the history of medieval Indian coinage. Following the example of Kublai Khan (1260-94) of China and Gai Khatu (1293 A.D.) of Persia, Muhammad bin Tughluq issued orders that *tankas* of bronze[31] be minted and used for and at par with the *silver tankas*.

Various reasons have been forwarded by different writers, contemporary as well as modern, for this novel experiment of Muhammad bin Tughluq. The underlying theme of Barani's account is that the financial stringency of the state had compelled the sultan to take this step. There may be some truth in it, but Barani's statement that, on account of the failure of his taxation policy in the Doab and the subsequent famine in northern India, the state treasury was emptied, is wrong. In reality, the Doab episode (1335-36) had taken place after the failure of the experiment in token currency (1330-32). The fact that the sultan had subsequently paid back to the public, gold and silver coins in return for the token currency and managed a most difficult situation with astonishing success, leads us to the conclusion that the financial difficulty was not the reason for the introduction of token currency; on the other hand, the failure of the experiment must have resulted in the financial bankruptcy of the state.

Though Muhammad bin Tughluq had inherited a well-filled treasury from his father, he was always anxious to find out new ways and means of improving the financial condition of the state. Firishta rightly tells us that the sultan introduced token currency because he wished to augment his resources in order to carry into effect his wild plans of conquest and administrative reforms which appealed so powerfully to his ambitious nature. Ishwara Topa was probably the first among the modern historiographers to infer that the

30. *The Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhli*, London, 1871; Indian reprint, Delhi, 1967.

31. The traditional fractional currency, called the *jittals*, were made of copper; Barani says that the new *tankas*, to be used as equivalent to the silver *tankas* were also made of copper whereas Firishta uses the word *biranj*—brass or bronze, alloys of copper with tin, zinc or other base metals.

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shortage of silver was the most important reason for this measure. In medieval India silver was most extensively used for coinage; the gold coin were not very common. The increasing trade and commerce and the vast dimensions of the tughluq empire increased the demand for silver. The disbursement of incalculable amounts of silver coins to the imperial armies and civil services created a problem similar to that which Alauddin Khalji had also to face once. The latter had met it by lowering the salaries of the soldiers and controlling the prices of the commodities. Muhammad bin Tughluq did not want, however, to revive the khalji horror. He met the problem of the scarcity of silver by three methods. First, he raised the price of silver in relation to gold. The relative value of gold and silver was reduced to the ratio of seven to one instead of ten to one which generally prevailed during the reigns of his predecessors. Second, he increased the weight of gold coins and reduced that of the silver ones. Under Alauddin Khalji, gold and silver *tankas* weighed 175 grains each; Muhammad bin Tughluq introduced, in their place, gold *dinar* of 200 grains and silver *adali* of 144 grains. It clearly shows that as compared with gold, there was relative scarcity of silver in the country under Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign. Third, in order to compensate for the shortage of silver, he started token currency which was to be treated at par with silver currency. Above all, Muhammad bin Tughluq possessed originality of thought and loved experimentation. He wanted to open a new chapter in the history of coinage in India. He was fully aware of the success of token currency in China and decided to try the experiment without the slightest intention of defrauding or cheating his own subjects as alleged by the contemporary writers.

Muhammad bin Tughluq made the bronze coins as the legal tender in about 1330 A.D., and put them at par, in value, with the silver coins. The fundamental principle of his token currency was the same as that of the modern paper and metallic currency. The intrinsic value of the bronze coins was insignificant but they were issued on government credit. The scheme was on the 'whole quite good and statesmanlike' but bad execution led to its failure in spite of the best intentions of the sultan. Unfortunately, Muhammad bin Tughluq did not take steps to make the mint the monopoly of the state nor there was any elaborate machinery to prepare the standard coins. Any goldsmith could produce as good a coin as the royal token. Edward Thomas observes that :

> There was no special machinery to mark the difference of the fabric of the royal mint and the handiwork of the moderately skilled artisan. Unlike the precautions taken to prevent the imitation of the Chinese paper notes, there was positively no

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

check on the authenticity of the copper token, and no limit to the power of production by the masses at large.[32]

Barani does not exaggerate the point when he says that the 'house of every hindu[33] was turned into a mint', and the people, including muslims, of course, began to forge the coins on an extensive scale. They turned their 'utensils into coins' and

> with these they paid their tribute (taxes), and with these they purchased horses, arms and fine things of all kinds. The *rais*, the village headmen and landowners grew rich and strong upon these copper coins, but the state was impoverished... Every goldsmith struck copper coins in his workshop, and the treasury was filled with these copper coins.[34]

Foreign merchants purchased Indian goods with the token currency in vogue but refused to accept the latter while selling their goods; it led to the spread of confusion and discontent in the country. The people held back gold and silver coins and, at the same time, hesitated in dealing with token coins which 'were not valued more than pebbles or potsherds'.[35] Barani states that the coins of gold and silver, because of 'great scarcity, rose fourfold and fivefold in value. Trade was interrupted on every side',[36] and all transactions in money came to a standstill.

Never was so wise a measure of reform so cruelly frustrated than this experiment in token currency. The sultan was compelled to order for the withdrawal of token currency after it had been in use for about two years. He recalled all the token coins, exchanging each for the silver one; the people got gold and silver in exchange for all such coins whether genuine or forged. Barani writes:

> So many of these copper *tankas* were brought to the treasury that heaps of them rose up in Tughlikabad like mountains. Great sums went out of the treasury in exchange for the copper, and a great deficiency was caused. When the sultan found that

32. Chronicles of the Pathan Kings; *op. cit*; p. 245.

33. By the word *hindu* Barani obviously meant the goldsmiths. Since the goldsmiths were mostly hindus, he uses this term for them—'a favourite practice with Barani to use a generic term where a specific term is required', K.A. Nizami observes that Barani's use of the word *turk* of ilbarites in the context of the rise of the khalji, and his use of the word *hindu* here and in connection with the regulations of Alauddin Khalji concerning *khuts*, *muqaddams* and *chaudhris* are examples of this presentation, which has caused considerable confusion'.
—*Comp. HI*, V, pp. 517-18 fn.

34. Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 240.

35. *ibid.*

36. *ibid.*

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

his project had failed, and that great loss had been entailed upon the treasury through his copper coins, he more than ever turned against his subjects."[37]

Thus the discredited token currency having been recalled, all forgery was stopped and the credit of the government restored. The storm blew over, the panic ended and the people grew rich at the cost of the state so much so that not even a 'murmur' about the affair was heard by Ibn Battuta who came to India shortly after wards. Abbas, the author of the *Masalik ul Absar*, also knew nothing about it. The above-mentioned statement of Barani, however, needs a comment; it contradicts his earlier observation that Muhammad bin Tughluq had adopted token currency in order to refill his empty treasury. Had that been the case, he could not have afforded to buy back token coins, including millions of the forged ones, in exchange for gold and silver. As a matter of fact, the sultan displayed a rare type of patience, courage and sportsman's spirit in winding up a project which had failed not only because of bad execution by the state but also because of the dishonesty of his people. He was full of remorse for having mishandled a wisely conceived project and readily atoned for the acts of omission and commission of his subjects too. The whole episode is a sad commentary on the incompetence of the ruler and irresponsible conduct of his subjects; both the parties were equally to blame.

In addition to the well-known causes, such as forgery by the people, the absence of any elaborate machinery to prepare standard coins, the sultan's failure to monopolise the mint or stop the forgery by devising special methods for the detection of the forged coins, and the corruption of the state officials who were most probably in league with the malcontents, some other important factors were also responsible for the failure of the measure. Token currency, for its success, requires the permanent credit of the government. In medieval India, the muslim dynasties were always changing. The people could not hope that the successors of Muhammad bin Tughluq or the subsequent rulers of the new dynasties would ever accept these token coins as legal tender. Second, there was already an abundance of fractional currency of copper-jittals, etc., the people accepted it because its exchange value was not very high. The token currency was, however, to be treated at par with the silver currency. The illiterate and unimaginative masses could not understand the difference between the two and were simply confused. They thought that the sultan intended to rob them. Third, there being no understanding or agreement with foreign governments regarding the exchange value of the token currency, the foreign merchants were in the right when they refused to accept bronze coins in their business transactions. No other state, whether in India or abroad, would

37. *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 241.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

have shown any consideration for the token currency of Muhammad bin Tughluq in those days. Last but not least, the price of metals depended on the law of supply and demand, and could not be fixed by royal enactments. The sultan roused discontent by disregarding this law in raising the price of silver of his own sweet will. Muhammad bin Tughluq's measure of token currency was much in advance of the age; under the circumstances, it was bound to fail, and it is not surprising that it failed miserably.

The Proposed Khurasan Expedition (1332-33)

Muhammad bin Tughluq was not content with his vast Indian possessions; like Alauddin Khalji, he had the visions of universal conquest. Barani and Firishta tell us that soon after the retreat of Tarmashirin, the mongol chief of Transoxiana, the sultan began to dream of extending his empire by the conquest of foreign countries; Khurasan was the first to catch his fancy. A brief explanatory reference to the political background of his proposed Khurasan expedition is deemed necessary. The country of Khurasan formed a part of the Persian empire of the ilkhan mongols. Abu S'aid, then mongol emperor of Persia, being minor, his empire was coveted by Tarmashirin, the chaghatai chief of Tarnsoxiana. Tarmashirin, having suffered an unexpected defeat at the hands of the Persian armies near Ghazni, was compelled to cross the Indian border, in 1326 A.D., with 40,000 soldiers. As mentioned earlier, Muhammad bin Tughluq made effective arrangements for the defence of his dominions and Tarmashirin was constrained to beat a hasty retreat towards Afghanistan. Before his return to Transoxiana, Tarmashirin is said to have formed a friendly alliance with Muhammad bin Tughluq for the conquest of Khurasan; it so appears that they had also taken the ruler of Egypt into confidence in connection with this campaign, thus leading to the formation of what may be called a 'triple alliance'.

On reaching Tarnsoxiana, Tarmashirin sent his son-in-law Amir Nauroz, with a number of mongol chiefs to the court of Muhammad bin Tughluq. They joined his army and Amir Nauroz remained in the service of the sultan until the latter's death in 1351. Barani writes that, on the instigation of these foreigners, the sultan prepared a wild project of conquering Khurasan and Iraq.[38]

In pursuance of this project, vast sums were lavished upon the officials and leading men of those countries. These great men

38. The fourth and fifth projects; as per the narrative of Barani, lavish expenditure on 'wooing' the mongol chiefs is termed by him as the fourth project, while raising of the Khurasan army is treated as project number five.

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came to him with insinuating proposals and deceitful representations, and as far as they knew how, or were able, they robbed the throne of its wealth.[39]

From Barani's complaint we infer that Muhammad bin Tughluq spent lavishly upon the foreign chiefs with the object of eliciting information about the countries of Khurasan and Iraq. Afghanistan was then under the control of Tarmashirin and Muhammad bin Tughluq's plan seemed to establish some sort of joint sphere of influence in the muslim world. It is said that Tarmashirin opened Ghazni to direct communciations and negotiations with Muhammad bin Tughluq; Ghazni thus became a diplomatic centre and came within the political influence of the sultan who frequently sent money to its government and almost took the 'Qazi of Ghazna' into his pay—a fact which Barani repeatedly deplores. Ibn Battuta, on the basis of his personal experience in the court of Tarmashirin at Bukhara, tells us that Muhammad bin Tughluq was extremely kind to Tarmashirin and that brotherly relations existed between the two. Tarmashirin was not an 'infidel' like his predecessors; he had adopted *sunni* form of Islam as the state religion of Transoxiana. This was perhaps an additional reason for the close intimacy of Tarmashirin and Muhammad bin Tughluq.

According to the statement of Barani, the sultan made a special recruitment of 3,70,000 armed personnel for the proposed conquest of Khurasan and Iraq; this new force, known as 'the Khurasan Army', was obviously over and above the regular imperial army of Delhi and the contingents of the provincial governors. It included a large number of the rajputs and hindus of the Doab as well as the mongol mercenary troops. As the entire force had been raised within a year, the terms of recruitment must have been very liberal and attractive. The incident took place sometime in 1333-34, before the death of Abu S'aid, the minor ruler of Persia; he expired in 1335.

As luck would have it, the Khurasan expedition did not materialise and the army could not be put to use; its maintenance and equipment caused a heavy drainage of wealth. In the words of Barani,

> for a whole year, these soldiers were supported and paid, but as they were not employed in war and conquest, when the next year came round there was not sufficient money in the treasury to support them.[40]

Barani, however, gives no reasons why the Khurasan expedition was not undertaken. It was probably because of the sudden and unexpected changes that came about in the diplomatic and political relations of Persia, Egypt and Transoxiana. These were,

39. Barani, *Tarikh*; p. 241.
40. *ibid.*

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the restoration of friendly relations between the court of Persia and sultan of Egypt, and the deposition of Tarmashirin by one of his cousins. The triple alliance was thus broken. Unaided Muhammad bin Tughluq was constrained to call off the expedition.

The two earlier projects could be justified to some extent on rational grounds but not so the crazy plan for the conquest of Khurasan. Such an expedition had little chance of success. True that there was political instability in Khurasan on account of the unpopular Persian rule and 'minority' of the Persian monarch, but how did Muhammad bin Tughluq plan to establish his hold there by jumping over Afghanistan which did not constitute a part of his dominions ? It is strange that the sultan took up such an ill-conceived project at the bidding of a handful of the self-seeking foreign nobles who apparently served as a liaison between Delhi and the courts of Transoxiana and Egypt. In planning this expedition, the geopolitical factors were totally ignored; it was impossible to adequately equip and despatech such a huge force over the Hindukush through the unsubjugated country of Afghanistan, with its difficult terrain and inhospitable climate. The only redeeming feature about Muhammad bin Tughluq is that he abandoned the project before actually dragging the army through the Khyber pass to veritable disaster. To that extent, we must give him credit for having shown some wisdom in the long run. Out of the Khurasan army, about a lakh of the soldiers were employed in the Qarachil expedition, while the rest were disbanded. The soldiers, being suddenly thrown out of employment, took up to plunder and robbery and proved a great nuisance to the government as well as the public.

The Qarachil Expedition (1333-34)

According to Barani, the Qarachil expedition of Muhammad bin Tughluq was a part of the project called 'Khurasan expedition'. After the failure of his scheme for the conquest of Khurasan, the sultan utilised a part of the Khurasan army for this purpose. Firishta, who himself did not know the exact nature of the expedition, writes that it was directed against China; some of the modern writers have blindly followed Firishta's account. Barani states that the sultan's object was to conquer 'the mountain of Qarajal' or Qarachal, which was situated 'between the territories of Hind and those of China, so that the passage for horses and soldiers and the march of the army might be rendered easy'.[41] His statement implies that the expedition was directed against Himachal or the Himalayas; some of the modern writers have wrongly criticised Barani for having made this statement which had nothing to do with securing of a passage for the Khurasan expedition. It has, however, been correctly suggested that by Qarachil, the contemporary writers probably meant Kurmachil.

41. Barani, *Tarikh*; pp. 341-42.

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the old name of Kumaun. Thus the imperial army was sent against some independent rajput states in the Kumaun-Garhwal region. These hilly tracts usually served as a place of refuge for the rebels against the government of Delhi. That is why Muhammad bin Tughluq wanted to bring them under his direct control.

Khusrau Malik, a nephew of sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq, was the commander-in-chief of the Qarachil army. After a careful analysis of the situation, the sultan instructed him to establish military posts at intervals along the route through the mountains between the position to be stormed and the base on the plains. These posts were to serve the twofold purpose of facilitating the transport of provisions and serving as places of refuge in case of retreat or disorder. So long as these instructions of the sultan were acted upon, Khusrau Malik met with success. The royal troops captured 'Jidya' and the surrounding country at the foot of the Himalayas. They seized the lands and treasures of the hostile chieftains and then climbed up the heights and captured 'Warrangal'. Khusrau Malik sent a written intimation of his victories to the sultan who despatched a *qazi* and a *khatib* to take charge of the civil administration of the newly acquired territories. It so appears, however, that the initial success turned Khusrau Malik's head, and he transgressed the sultan's orders. Flushed with victory, he took the whole army across the mountains into Tibet where it was overtaken by ice-cold winds and rains, followed by the outbreak of plague. A panic seized the army and the tables were turned. The mountaineers, having got the upper hand, hurled blocks of stones from the hill tops on to the retreating troops in the valley below. The military posts, established previously to safeguard the retreat, fell into disorder. As a result the whole of the army was destroyed. Only a few survived, three according to Ibn Battuta and ten as per narrative of Barani, to tell the tale of misery to the frustrated sultan in Delhi, who immediately got them hanged for reasons better known to him.

The Qarachil army perished *albeit* the sultan achieved the political objective which had necessitated this expedition; Ibn Battuta makes a significant statement in this connection:

> After this, the sultan made peace with the inhabitants of the hills on condition that they should pay him a certain amount; since these people held possession of the territory lying at the foot of the hills, they were unable to use it without his permission.[42]

The hindu ruler of Nagarkot (Kangra) was also subjugated a couple of years later (1337-38); though plundered by Mahmud of Ghazni, Nagarkot had never constituted a part of the sultanate of Delhi before.

42. The Rehla (Mahdi Husain); p. 145.

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Revenue Reforms : Taxation in the Doab (1333-34)

The failure of the abovementioned four major projects, viz., transfer of the capital, the experiment of token currency, Khurasan and the Qarachil expeditions, had disastrous effect on the finances of the state. The royal treasury was almost emptied and wealth 'which is the true source of political power', according to Barani, 'was expended'.[43] The sultan, in desperation, was compelled to think of new ways and means for increasing the revenues of the state; he launched the fifth and the last major project pertaining to 'the enhancement of taxation in the Doab'.[44] This measure also ended in smoke and had catastrophic effects on the fortunes of the tughluq empire.

Muhammad bin Tughluq had started taking interest in the revenue administration of the state from the very beginning of his reign. Like his father, he stood for the extension of agriculture and adopted liberal attitude towards the cultivators. He introduced a register of the revenue and expenditure of the provinces in which the financial resources and liabilities of each *iqta* were shown separately. It was perhaps intended to introduce a uniform revenue policy throughout the sultanate on the basis of the information gathered from this register. We, however, do not know of any valuable reform made by him in the land revenue administration; the measurement of land and the rational assessment of the government demand were never contemplated. Nevertheless, the sultan is said to have made one brief experiment for the reclamation of the barren land and improvement of agricultural produce through rotation of crops. For this purpose, he created a department of agriculture, styled *diwan-i-kohi*, which was managed by agricultural experts and officials of the revenue establishment in collaboration with the cultivators. A tract of land, about sixty miles square in area, was entrusted to it for experimentation and an investment of seventy lakh *tankas* was made on it over a period of two years. The cultivators as well as the bureaucracy of his day failed, however, to appreciate the true value of such a scientific approach to the problem of agricultural growth; the corrupt officials misappropriated the funds and the agriculturists did not apply their brains to break the old traditions in the pattern of cultivation. The department was wound up after three years; this was too short a period for such an experiment to produce any tangible results, of course.

43. Barani, *Tarikh*; p. 241.

44. Barani is the only contemporary authority to make mention of this tragic episode as a project, and that also out of context from the point of view of chronology; he gives serial number one to this project whereas Mahdi Husain, after careful analysis of the entire material available on the subject, has come to the conclusion that it was not the first but the last of the sultan's projects.

—Refer to Barani, *Tarikh*; p. 238; & Mahdi Husain, *Tughluq Dynasty*; pp. 191-92.

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No more is heard of the sultan's interest in the improvement of agricutlure or reform of the revenue administration thereafter; the enhancement of taxation in the Doab had nothing to do with that type of creative urge in him. It is not appropriate either to give it the name of 'a project'. The sultan was anxious to replenish the empty treasury; the fertility of the Doab attracted him and, according to Barani, he arbitrarily enhanced the taxes in that region. The taxes were said to be intolerable and wrought untold miseries on the people. In the words of Barani,

> the enforcement of those schemes was made so rigorous that the feeble and low among the *ra'iyat* were wiped out, while those who were rich and possessed the means and wherewithal became rebellious, with the result that the cities and districts were ruined and cultivation was reduced to nothing. On hearing of the ruin and destruction of the *ra'iyat* in the Doab and fearing lest a similar fate should befall them, the inhabitants of distant provinces also revolted and crept into jungles. On account of the diminution of cultivation in the Doab land (*miyan-i-Doab*), the ruin of the *ra'iyat* of the *miyan-i-Doab* and the rare arrival of the caravans and convoys of grain from other parts of Hindustan in Delhi as well as in the suburbs of Delhi and in the whole of the Doab area, a destructive famine broke out; prices of grains soared high and the rains also stopped. A general famine prevailed, which continued for several years during which period perished millions of human beings; the old established life was disorganised and many people were displaced and uprooted. From that day departed the glory of sultan Muhammad's empire and his administration declined and became ineffective.[45]

Barani, whose native district Baran (mod. Bulandshahr, U.P.) also suffered from the effects of this enhanced taxation, bitterly criticised the sultan for his cruel treatment of the agriculturists of the Doab. His version of the Doab episode is, however, vague and rather 'misleading'. In the first place, he does not inform the readers as to the actual rate of the additional assessment imposed by the sultan; his statement like 'the taxes were doubled' or 'increased ten or five times' are meaningless unless we know the existing rates of taxation which were affected by this enhancement. Second, his account of the sufferings of the peasants is exaggerated; and, in the third place, he confuses principal points in the story by overemphasising the relationship between three distinct issues—the Doab episode, the spread of general famine in the country, and the widespread revolts in various parts of his empire. Regarding Muhammad bin Tughluq's taxation in the Doab, a few points are worthy of note. While recruiting the Khurasan army, the sultan had made concessions to the peasants and the rajput warrior classes of the Doab; he had remitted even

45. Improved trs. by Mahdi Husain, quoted in *Tughluq Dynasty*, pp. 225-26.

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the land tax in certain districts. He re-introduced these taxes after the disbandment of the army. The people, who had once enjoyed a concession by way of a special privilege, resented even the re-imposition of the normal taxes; non-payment of taxes had been allowed to them as a privilege but they converted it into their right. Moreover, we have reasons to believe that the taxes imposed by Muhammad bin Tughluq were not heavy. Alauddin Khalji had raised the state demand for land revenus to 50 per cent of the actual produce. It was subsequently reduced by Mubarak Shah Khalji and Ghiasuddin Tughluq; the latter attempted to pacify the agriculturists by charging only 10 per cent of the produce as the land revenue; Muhammad bin Tughluq probably raised this rate to double the amount. In other words, he brought the land revenue to the normal standard, i.e., about one-fifth of the actual produce.

Of course, in addition to the normal land revenue, Muhammad bin Tughluq levied some *abwabs* such as house tax and the grazing tax. These taxes had been in operation during the reign of Alauddin Khalji and were very unpopular. As these had been allowed to fall into disuse under Alauddin Khalji's successors, their revival by Muhammad bin Tughluq was resented very much. It led to widespread discontent among the people of the Doab. The refractory landlords made alliance with the disbanded soldiers of the Khurasan army and created trouble for the government. They refused to pay the taxes and made an altogether different use of the arms and the military training that they had acquired recently at the expense of the state. The tax collectors used force for the realisation of state dues. As luck would have it, the rains failed and northern India was caught in the grip of severe famine about this time; it lasted two or three years. The bondage of goodwill and faith between the sultan and his bureaucracy seemed to have broken completely; that is why, none among his ministers dared to apprise the sultan of the need to change his taxation policy in time. As a result, the revenue officials continued to oppress the starving peasants for the extraction of the state dues. Unable to simultaneously bear the government oppression and starvation the poor cultivators were forced to abandon their lands; most of them flocked to the capital and other provincial towns with their starving families while some resorted to highway robbery. The tug-of-war between the unimaginative bureaucracy and peasantry in the Doab is explained by Hajji ud Dabir in the following words:

> When the tax collectors treated the peasants harshly, the latter killed them. On this, the emperor, sent the *amiran i sadah* against them. They killed the peasants. Then the peasants seized the opportunity and killed the *amiran i sadah*. As a result, the region (of the Doab) was completely ruined.[46]

46. Quoted in Mahdi Husain, *Tughluq Dynasty*; p. 232.

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As usual, the sultan realised the gravity of the situation too late. He adopted liberal relief measures for the populace of Delhi[47] and the other famine-affected areas. The collection of land revenue and other taxes was suspended, the peasants were advanced loans for the purchase of bullocks and seeds, and provision was made to dig wells for irrigation. Nevertheless, many of the uprooted peasant families could not be persuaded to go back to their villages and take up cultivation once again. The Doab episode was silently merged into the countrywide discontent against the rule of Muhammad bin Tughluq.

Rebellions and General Upsurge Against the Rule of Muhammad bin Tughluq (1335-51)

They year 1335 marks the beginning of countrywide disorders and general upsurge against the unpopular rule of Muhammad bin Tughluq. The people were totally disillusioned by the unpredictable and unintelligible conduct of the once 'Adil' (the just) sultan turned 'Zalim' (the tyrant); he was universally dubbed as the 'wisest fool' of his day. The sultan was dissatisfied with his corrupt bureaucracy and disaffected nobility, and, in turn, had lost their confidence; while the public was disgusted with the sultan as well as his entire administrative establishment. Such being the case, the sultan gradually lost his hold over his military generals, provincial governors and the feudal chieftains; they, individually as well as collectively, resorted to revolts in quick succession. Beginning with an uprising in Ma'abar—the eastern cost of the extreme southern peninsnla in 1335, the sultan faced as many as sixteen rebellions[48] till his death in 1351. These were different in nature and scope from the earlier 'isolated instances' of revolts of some disaffected individuals. The main objective of all those who took up arms against Muhammad bin Tughluq since 1335 was to cut off their contacts with Delhi and set up independent state. The Ma'abar rebellion, therefore, constitutes a watershed in the history of the sultanate of Delhi; it signals the decline and slow disintegration of the mighty turkish empire of early medieval India.

47. Ibn Battuta writes:
When famine was raging all over Hind and Sind, and prices became exorbitant to such an extent that the price of a maund of wheat rose to six *dinars*, the sultan ordered six months' provisions at the rate of a daily allowance of one and half *ratl* of *maghrib* (equivalent to 750 grams of modern Indian weight) per head to be given to every one great or small, free or slave. The jurists and judges set out registering the names of the inhabitants in different streets, sending for the people and giving to each victuals amounting to six months' provisions.
—The Rehla (Mahdi Husain), pp. 84-85.

48. For details, refer to Mahdi Husain, *op. cit*; pp. 195-297.

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Northern India was in the grip of severe famine and the people of the Doab were in ferment when Saiyyid Hasan, the governor of Ma'abar raised his standard of revolt. A contingent of the royal 'army sent to recover Ma'abar', situated at a distance of 'six months' march from Delhi, changed sides and 'remained there.[49] It enraged the sultan who personally led the imperial army to the south to deal with the situation. To his great misfortune, the outbreak of plague in the army at Bidar (Telengana) took a heavy toll of life and compelled the sultan to retrace his steps to Daulatabad, he was also taken ill but escaped death 'by divine providence'. The imperial army was totally crippled and thinned by the deaths of numerous generals and thousands of soldiers. The sultan was so much disheartened by this natural calamity that he gave up the idea of sending a punitive expedition to the far south and returned to the north; he stayed at Dhar (Malwa) for a pretty long time till his return to the capital in July 1337. It afforded an opportunity to Hasan to set himself up as an independent ruler at Madura with the title of sultan Saiyyid Ahsan Shah. It was the first independent muslim state carved out of the sultanate of Delhi in the south.

While Muhammad bin Tughluq was away from the capital, Amir Hulajun, a mongol noble in the imperial service of Delhi, killed the governor of Lahore and declared his independence. He was, however, defeated and killed by a royal army led by *Khwaja i Jahan* Ahmad Ayaz who held charge of the central government at Delhi on behalf of the sultan. Malik Hushang, son of Kamaluddin Gurg, then governor of Daulatabad, revolted in 1335-36 and took shelter with a hindu chieftain of the region. On the intervention of some nobles, however, he offered submission to the sultan and was granted pardon. The sultan appointed Qutlugh Khan to be the new governor of Daulatabad. Saiyyid Ibrahim, son of Saiyyid Hasan, the rebel chief of Ma'abar, held the governorship of Hansi. He also defied the imperial authority of Delhi but was taken prisoner and executed.

This was, however, only the beginning of the troubles. Military prowess had been the cementing force which held the distant provinces under the control of the sultanate. The near destruction of the imperial army in 1335-36 by the cruel hands of fate, incapacitated it for any major action for about a decade. It encouraged the provincial governors to defy the authority of Muhammad bin Tughluq who had become thoroughly unpopular amongst his subjects throughout the country.

Ghiasuddin Bahadur, the governor of Bengal had revolted against Delhi in 1330-31 but was defeated and killed by the royal

49. Barani, *Tarikh*; p. 243.

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troops. Thereafter, Bahram Khan, a half-brother of sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq, was made governor of Sonargaon (Dacca) while Lakhnauti was held in governorship by Qadr Khan. On the death of Bahram Khan in 1338-39, there was a general uprising against Delhi but the sultan failed to take any action to restore the imperial authority. Qadr Khan was also killed by the rebels and, ultimately, two independent muslim states came into existence in Bengal with headquarters at Sonargaon and Lakhnauti, under the rule of Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah and Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah respectively. Bengal was thus cut off from the sultanate of Delhi forever.

The hold of the imperial government over the provincial governors had been weakening since 1335; therefore, the earlier ideal of the sultan to establish a uniform civil administration throughout the empire also received an ignominious burial. As an alternative, the sultan initiated a new policy of assigning the governorship of the *iqtas* to those nobles who promised to pay the maximum annual tribute to the centre; in return, they were permitted to manage the internal affairs of their provinces as they pleased. This policy struck at the very roots of the solidarity of the state. The ambitious nobles got such assignments by holding out promises to pay the exorbitant amounts to the imperial government, which they subsequently failed to collect from their subjects. Being afraid of the sultan's wrath for having broken the contract, they were constrained to revolt out of desperation. In this category are included the rebellions of about half a dozen otherwise loyal and trustworthy *grandees* of the empire. Nizam Ma'in governor of Kara, could not collect even 'one-tenth of the stipulated amount' that he had promised to remit to Delhi every year. Out of desperation, he declared his independence with the title of sultan Alauddin (1337-38). He was captured and flayed alive. Nusrat Khan had been entrusted with the governorship of Bidar by the sultan in 1335 on the promise of paying a crore of *tankas* every year to the imperial exchequer. He failed to make good that amount and revolted (1338-39). He was also defeated and taken captive to Delhi. Ali Shah revolted at Gulbarga in 1339-40; he was taken prisoner and banished to Afghanistan. The sultan added to h s troubles by distrusting even the oldest and the most trustworthy nobility of the state. Ainul Mulk Multani, the grand old man of the turkish elite, who had seen commendable service under Alauddin Khalji, held the charge of Oudh. The sultan showed his displeasure against him by transferring him to Daulatabad in 1340-41. Apprehending a worse fate at the hands of the *zalim* sultan, Ainul Mulk revolted. He was defeated and brought to Delhi in chains but the sultan spared his life.

Shahu Afghan, a rebellious noble, killed the governor of Multan (1341) and acquired control of the town. Muhammad bin Tughluq led an expedition against him under his personal command. On the approach of the royal army, Shahu fled to the hills; the frustrated sultan wreaked his vengeance upon the innocent Afghan inhabitants of his dominions. Similarly, the jat and bhatti rajput cultivators of

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Sunam and Samana withheld the state taxes and organised an insurrection. The royal army suppressed the revolt mercilessly; the rebel leaders were captured and brought to Delhi where they were either beheaded or forcibly converted to Islam.

The initial success of the sultan in suppressing the various provincial revolts did not improve the situation; his cruel and inhuman treatment of the rebels provoked the others to take up arms against him. The countrywide rebellions and disorders provided an opportunity to the hindus of the south to strive for independence. From among the old hindu ruling families, Krishna Nayak, son of Pratap Rudra Deva II, occupied Warrangal in 1343-44 and set up as an independent ruler though his success proved to be short-lived, while Vir Ballal III (death 342 A.D.) and his son Vir Ballal IV carried on the struggle for independence in the teeth of opposition from the sultans of Madura. Meanwhile, two enterprising brothers Harihar and Bukka Rai, who were associated with the extinct ruling house of Warrangal, laid the foundation of the town of Vijayanagar in 1336 and carved out a small principality which was transformed gradually into a mighty kingdom.

It was, however, the revolt of *amiran i sadah*[50] (the centurians)—the foreign nobles in the imperial service, in Malwa, Gujarat and Daulatabad which finally sealed the fate of the sultanate in the south. They enjoyed special privileges particularly because of the cooperation that they had once extended to the sultan in the transfer of the capital to Daulatabad. They were ambitious and aggressive in their conduct and grew rich at the cost of the state as well as the subjects. They showed signs of disaffection against the sultan. The sultan became apprehensive of the designs of Qutlugh Khan, governor of Daulatabad since 1335, who was thought to be the chief patron of the *amiran i sadah*. Muhammad bin Tughluq recalled him to the court at Delhi in 1341 and ordered Nizamuddin, the governor of Gujarat, to take the additional charge of Daulatabad as the viceroy of the Deccan. This infuriated the *amiran i sadah* who refused to cooperate with the new viceroy. About this time, Aziz Khumman, the newly appointed governor of Malwa, liquidated, in a single official get-together, as many as 89 *amiran i sadah* through treachery, at the bidding of the sultan. It led to the general conflagration among the turkish bureaucracy of Malwa, Gujarat and Maharashtra. The sultan mobilised the royal army and marched upon the disaffected provinces; before his arrival, Daulatabad had fallen into the hands of the rebels. The sultan defeated the rebels and recovered the outer fort of Daulatabad. However, the besieged rebels heroically defended the inner fort while their fellow

50. From *sadi*—a century or a unit of one hundred; the *sadah* amirs were mostly of foreign extraction; held civil and military assignments and each one of them is said to have commanded a hundred soldiers.

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brethren acquired control over the important towns of Maharashtra and Telengana and started a war of liberation against the oppressive and discredited regime of Muhammad bin Tughluq; they received encouragement and support from the public in general.

While the conquest of Daulatabad was half-way through, the sultan received intelligence about the outbreak of a fresh uprising in Gujarat. Taghi, a new rebel leader, killed the governor of Gujarat, occupied Anhilwara and Cambay, and attacked Broach. It unnerved the sultan; he left the half-conquered Maharashtra in the hands of dispirited and demoralised officers and himself made a dash towards Gujarat with the bulk of the royal army. This enabled the rebels of Maharashtra and Telengana to extirpate the royal pockets of resistance in the south and lay the foundation of the Bahmani kingdom; Hasan Gangu, the most accomplished leader of the rebels, ascended the throne at Daulatabad in August 1347 with the title of sultan Alauddin Bahman Shah. It sounded the death-knell of the imperial sway of the sultanate of Delhi over the southern peninsula.

Meanwhile, Muhammad bin Tughluq was engaged in a deadly conflict with Taghi in Gujarat. Taghi suffered defeats in a number of encounters and retreated towards Sind; he took shelter with the Jam of Thatta. The sultan gave up all hope about the recovery of the south but concentrated his attention upon Gujarat. He stayed there for over two years, restored law and order, and then made up his mind to recover Sind by settling his scores with Taghi. On the way to Thatta, he was suddenly taken ill and died a broken-hearted man on March 20, 1351.

An Estimate

Muhammad bin Tughluq is the most tragic personality among the sultans of Delhi. He was one of the greatest rulers of early medieval India *albeit* his character and performance have been the subject of controversy ever since his own times. His subjects misunderstood him, the bureaucracy could not comprehend his policies and programmes and the contemporary chroniclers faild to evaluate correctly the achievements and failures of his reign. The modern historians have equally been mistaken in the critical analysis of his character and achievements; contradictory opinions have often been expressed on the subject, and the controversy is 'as fresh as ever'. Of course, no other ruler of early medieval India has 'evoked so much discussion concerning his policy and character'[51] as Muhammad bin Tughluq.

Muhammad bin Tughluq left nothing to be desired from the point of view of academic and intellectcal attainments. A scholar

51. *BVB*, VI, p. 80.

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as well as soldier, he was an enthusiastic and ambitious man of high moral character who started his reign with everything in his favour. The people expected great things from him and he, in turn, being a man of ideals, intended to bring about radical changes in the administrative set up and extend his imperial sway over the entire Indian subcontinent. However, all the virtues of his character and qualities of head and heart were of no avail since he suffered from the lack of common sense. Partly an idealist and partly a visionary, Muhammad bin Tughluq was a self-willed autocrat who seldom cared to take counsel or follow the advice tendered by his ministers. Over-confident of his capabilities, he formulated abstract schemes which he executed in haste without considering the pros and cons of their implications. In spite of his best intentions, some of his lofty projects failed simply because these were either executed badly or found to be impracticable. Muhammad bin Tughluq proved to be a most impractical man, in deed! He was very obstinate; once an idea got into his head, he pursued it irrespective of the consequences; and being hot tempered, he got irritated over trifles and inflicted severe punishments on those who failed to dance to his tune. He 'lacked discretion' and 'cool judgment' and 'knew no moderation'; he definitely displayed divergent traits of character at one and the same time, and has rightly been described as a 'mixture of opposites'. He was, therefore, his own enemy. There is no denying the fact that, as ruler and administrator, he failed miserably. He lost in the estimation of the *elite* and the *grandees* of the empire and came to be hated and despised by his subjects; nevertheless, he held out against the rebels and political opponents fearlessly and stubbornly till the bitter end. He died in harness and, in his death, redeemed his 'honour and dignity' as one of the greatest despotic rulers of the period under review. He was by far the greatest of all the sultans of the tughluq dynasty. The sultanate of Delhi reached the maximum territorial as well as political dimensions during his reign; from the Khyber to Sonargaon (Dacca) and from Nagarkot (Kangra) to the extreme south. Muhammad bin Tughluq was the lord paramount of India. In rejecting him, the Indians also rejected the integrity of the central authority and political unity of the country, and reverted to the feudal pattern of the 'dark age' which had received a serious jolt since the days of Alauddin Khalji. The 'hair-brain' schemes of Muhammad bin Tughluq carried the rudiments of modernity and national integration *albeit* he failed to convince his people of their significance, and himself lacked the skill to implement them for the benefit of the people. The period of rule of Muhammad bin Tughluq constitutes one of the most tragic chapters in the history of early medieval India; it is a sad commentary on the well-intentioned but incompetent monarch, and corrupt, selfish and short-sighted bureaucracy who were called upon to rule the unimaginative and backward masses.

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3: Firoze Shah Tughluq (1351—1386)

The Elected Sultan

Muhammad bin Tughluq left no male issue[52] nor did he nominate a successor.[53] His sudden death in the army camp in the vicinity of Thatta,[54] therefore, created a serious situation; the soldiers decamped immediately and marched towards Delhi 'without leader, rule, or route, in the greatest disorder. No one heeded or listened to what anyone said, but continued the march like careless caravans'.[55] The mongol mercenaries who had been hired by sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq to suppress the rebellions, 'assailed the royal army in front' with the object of acquiring 'booty',[56] while the rebels of Thatta attacked the baggage train in the rear. Thousands of villagers, who had earlier been pressed into the service of the army, took to flight; they also joined hands with the rebels and began to pillage 'various lots of baggage on the right and left of the army'. It spread consternation among the 'imperialists' who stood in danger of being totally annihilated; they numbered, according to Barani two *lakh* human souls, including, of course, the families, slaves and the non-combatants. In that hour of crisis, the *shaikhs*, nobles and *ulema* of the imperial camp held an emergency council

52. He had only one offspring—a daughter, who was born in the reign of sultan Ghiasuddin Tughluq.

—Shams i Siraj Afif, *Tarikhi Firoze Shahi*; *E&D* III, pp. 280-81; & Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; *E&D*, III, p. 267.

There are thus two contemporay works bearing the same the *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*—one by Barani and the other by Afif. Barani's title is a misnomer. It ca ries the account of only six years (1351-56) of Firoze Tughluq's reign; even that is not very objective because Barani has indulged in a strain of adulation' of the sultan which spoils his narrative. On the other hand, Afif's book has a better claim to the title as it is devoted exclusively to the exhaustive study of Firoze Tughluq's reign, For a review of the two works, refer to *Introduction* of the present study.

For modern works on Firoze Tughluq exclusively, refer to J.M. Banerjee, *History of Firoze Shah Tughluq*; Delhi, 1967. R.C. Jauhri, *Firoze Tughluq*; Agra, 1968.

53. Barani's reference to Firoze Tughluq as 'the heir apparent and legatee of the late sultan' is wrong.

54. On the bank of the Indus at fourteen *kos* from Thatta.—Barani, Tarikh; *op. cit*; p. 265.

55. *ibid*; p. 266.

56. "The mongols fell to plundering, and carried off women, maids, horses, camels, troopers, baggage and whatever else had been sent on in advance. They had very nearly captured the royal harem and the treasure with the camels which carried it."

—Barani, *Tarikh*; p. 266.

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and, with near unanimity[57], elected Firoze Tughluq, son of *sipah salar* Rajab and an elderly cousin of Muhammad bin Tughluq, to be the sultan. Firoze Tughluq accepted the offer after some hesitation, and was formally coronated in a simple ceremony, held somewhere on the bank of the Indus where they had halted for the night before. The incident took place on March 23, 1351, three days after the death of Muhammad bin Tughluq. Firoze Tughluq swung into action immediately and made effective arrangements for the protection of the imperial forces; he conducted them safely to the capital via Multan and Dipalpur.

Meanwhile, Khwaja-i-Jahan, the *wazir* of Muhammad bin Tughluq, who held charge of the central government in Delhi, had installed an infant on the throne and declared him to be the son and successor of the deceased sultan. He, however, did not receive wide support for his cause and offered submission[58] to Firoze Tughluq near Hansi. Firoze Tughluq entered Delhi with the imperial army and was coronated with great pomp and show on August 25, 1351 ; he was about forty-six at that time. His succession, though 'bloodless', did not go unchallenged. Khudavandzada was apparently reconciled to the loss of political ascendancy for her family; nevertheless, she harboured a feeling of ill-will towards him and, after some time, hatched a conspiracy against the sultan. Her son Davar Malik was, however, not a party to it; his timely warning to the sultan saved the latter's life.[59] Similarly, two half-brothers of Firoze Tughluq, from the muslim wives of Rajab, also disputed his claim to the throne and were de-recognised by the imperial court.

Firoze Tughluq's father Rajab was the younger brother of Ghiasuddin Tughluq, while his mother was a bhatti rajput lady[60] who had to marry Rajab in order to save the estate of her father Ran Mal of Abohar from destruction at the hands of the muslims; Firoze Tughluq was her only child. Rajab died when Firoze was hardly six or seven years old; he was brought up by

57. Khudavandzada, sister of sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq, claimed the throne for her son Davar Malik; the latter's candidature was rejected by the war council on the ground that he was 'an incompetent person, incapable of governing'.

—Afif, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 276.

58. Khwaja-i-Jahan was the oldest *grandee* of the empire; he was about 80 at that time—'his frame was weak and feeble, and his hair was white, he was a kind-hearted man'. He was accordingly pardoned by the sultan and assigned the estate of Samana to spend the rest of his life in retirement. The nobility, who played the role of 'king-makers' for a while, did not approve of the sultan's action, however; and, on their insistence, Khwaja i Jahan was put to death before he could reach Samana.

59. Afif, *Tarikh*; pp. 290-92.

60. Bibi Naila, who became known as sultan bibi Kadhanu.

—Afif, *Tarikh*; p. 273.

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Ghiasuddin Tughluq just like a son. Firoze was a young lad of fourteen when Ghiasuddin became the sultan; at the young age, he was appointed deputy to the lord chamberlain (*naib i amir hajib*) with the title of *naib barbak*. Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq treated him with affection and usually kept him in his royal company. In 1345, when the sultan went out of the capital for the suppression of revolts in Malwa, Gujarat and Daulatabad, he constituted a royal council to run the administration; it comprised Kabir Khan, Khwaja-i-Jahan and Firoze. Kabir Khan had died during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq, and with the execution of Khwaja-i-Jahan, Firoze was left as the only prospective candidate for the exalted office of the sultan who had shared the royal powers in the previous regime. Most probably, Muhammad bin Tughluq desired Firoze to succeed him to the throne though his formal nomination as the heir apparent could not be effected owing to the sudden collapse of the sultan.

Firoze Tughluq was not a usurper, nor was his accession irregular. According to the Islamic law, sovereignty was not based upon descent though the son's right to rule was recognised, which received weightage only if the latter was competent to govern or enjoyed the approval of the nobility and the *ulema*. Nomination of heir apparent to the throne by the reigning monarch also received due consideration though Razia's nomination by her illustrious father Iltutmish was rejected by 'the Forty' slave generals on the ground that she was a woman. Therefore, there was nothing like the 'inherited right' of succession to the throne among the Indo-Turkish sultans of Delhi. From the point of view of descent, some other persons had better claims than Firoze Tughluq to succeed Muhammad bin Tughluq *albeit* their claims were rejected by the *grandees* of the empire. Firoze Tughluq was duly elected by them and declared competent to govern, may be because of his advanced age and long administrative experience but more because of the fact that, from among the kinsmen of the late sultan, he happened to be more prominent as a devoted *musalman* of high moral character who enjoyed the confidence of the nobility and the *ulema*. Firoze Tughluq was not a distinguished soldier and his mother had been a hindu by faith before her marriage; even these 'shortcomings' did not weight with the nobility and the *ulema* when they pronounced him 'fit' to be the sovereign. Of course, it was 'an abnormal decision,'[61] taken by them to suit 'the exigency of the situation,' which threw up Firoze Tughluq into prominence; his succession to the throne was based on the principle of the 'survival of the fittest' in a critical situation. It goes to the credit of Firoze Tughluq that he rose to the occasion, proved his worth as the saviour of the imperial camp and justified the confidence reposed in him by the *grandees* of the empire. Above all, it was his good

61. J.M. Banerjee, Firoze Shah Tughluq; *op. cit*; p. 14.

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fortune that he happened to be in the imperial camp at the hour of grave crisis; but for his presence there, his election as sovereign would have been a remote probability. Similarly, he proved to be an exceptionally lucky man in having escaped the hands of the assassins at the palace of Khudavandzada in Delhi soon after his accession to the throne. Firoze Tughluq strengthened his legal position as the rightful successor of Muhammad bin Tughluq by obtaining an investiture from the *khalifa* and assumed the title of *naile i amir ul momnin*; he also inscribed the *khalifa's* name on the coins.

Nature of His Rule

Firoze Tughluq enjoyed a long reign of thirty-seven years (1351-88). The first two decades of his rule were marked by peace and tranquillity, and a welcome relief to the subjects from the political turmoils and oppressive state policy of the previous regime. Being a man of peace, he took great interest in solving the domestic problems of the day and utilised the resources of the state for public welfare activities. He did not aspire to reconquer all the lost dominions of the empire nor was he successful when he attempted to do so. A poor general and incompetent military organiser, Firoze Tughluq did not pay proper attention towards the maintenance of a strong, well-equipped and efficient army which was, in fact, the backbone of the sultanate. Even on the home front, he proved to be a poor administrator who failed to utilise his long era of peace for developing the institutions of civil administration on healthy lines so as to ensure the stability and creditability of the central government and administration. The evil effects of his poor administration, weak foreign policy and defective military organisation began to show its ugly face after 1772 and the last seventeen years of his reign constituted an era of reaction during which slow but steady decay and disintegration of the sultanate set in.

It is significant to remember that Muhammad bin Tughluq had given a shattering blow to the *sultanate of Delhi* as an empire; Firoze Tughluq inherited the *sultanate* as a small kingdom only, and his reign was marked by the emergence of the forces for its ultimate decline.

Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul—the Prime Minister

On the day of his coronation, Firoze Tughluq appointed Malik Maqbul his prime minister (*wazir*) with the title of Khan-i-Jahan.[62] He was a brilliant administrator who held this exalted office till his death in 1370. As much of the credit for the successful civil administration of Firoze Tughluq's reign during this period,

62. His full title was—*Masnad-i-Aali Ulugh Qutlugh Azam-i-Humayun Khan-i Jahan Maqbul.*

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goes to Khan i Jahan, a brief review of his career is worthy of note.[63] Khan i Jahan was a brahmin from Telengana whose original name was Kattu or Kannu. During his early life, he was attached to the court of the last hindu ruler Pratap Rudra Deva II of Telengana. After the annexation of Telengana (1323-24) by Jauna Khan (later sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq), Kannu was brought a captive to Delhi where he embraced Islam and was given the name of Maqbul. When Muhammad bin Tughluq ascended the throne, he 'perceived in him (Maqbul) many marks of sagacity and intelligence' and made him the *naib wazir* for the metropolis of Delhi. Thereafter, his promotion to the higher offices was rapid; he received the title of Qawamul Mulk and governorship of Multan. He was the *naib wazir* (deputy prime minister) of the empire during the last years of Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign when Khwaja i Jahan held the office of the prime minister. He managed the administrative affairs with competence, issued many rules and regulations to restore the health of the revenue ministry (*diwan i wazarat*) and extended his control over the provincial officers with an iron hand. Khwaja i Jahan depended heavily upon him for the smooth running of the administration. Maqbul did not like, however, the action of the prime minister on the issue of succession to the throne after the death of Muhammad bin Tughluq. When Firoze Tughluq approached the capital with the imperial army, Maqbul deserted Khwaja i Jahan and joined the imperial camp;[64] he 'helped' Firoze Tughluq 'to get possession of the city'.[65]

The appointment of Maqbul as the prime minister with the title of Khan-i-Jahan was hailed by the nobles and the *ulema* though he was not one of the 'king-makers' of the imperial camp who had been instrumental in raising Firoze Tughluq to the throne. Maqbul richly deserved this exalted office on merit, indeed! The sultan reposed full confidence in him and the two acted in perfect harmony with each other. Whenever the sultan went out of the capital for hunting or on military expeditions, Khan i Jahan

63. For the detailed 'memoir of Khan-i-Jahan', refer to Afif, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; 'seventh mu addama'; pp. 367-71.

64. Firoze Tughluq received homage from Qawamul Mulk Maqbul somewhere near Ikdar. Afif writes:

> "Another pleasure which the sultan received on the same day at this place was the birth of a son, who was named Fateh Khan. The sultan founded a town there, to which he gave the name of Fatehabad."
>
> —*Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 283.

65. *ibid*; p. 368.

Having lost the support of Maqbul, Khwaja-i-Jahan was compelled to offer submission to Firoze Tughluq soon afterwards. The sultan was still encamped at Fatehabad (old Ikdar) when Khwaja-i-Jahan laid down the arms before him.

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deputised for him and carried on the administration with such wisdom and alacrity that the long absence of the sultan had no adverse effect on the functioning of the central government.

Khan-i-Jahan was liberally provided by the sultan and he literally rolled in wealth; his salary was 13 *lakhs of tankas* per annum. His abundant wealth raised him above all corruption and, instead of making him arrogant and power-drunk, moulded him into a magnificent, lovable and dignified personality. He enjoyed all royal privileges and luxuries of the princely order. Afif observes that 'notwithstanding his onerous official duties', Khan-i-Jahan was 'much devoted to the pleasure to the *harem*, and sought eagerly for the pretty handmaids'. He is said to have two thousand women of various nationalities and races in his *harem* and produced dozens of children, all of whom received liberal privy purses.[66] Khan i Jahan was more than eighty at the time of his death which took place during the eighteenth year of the reign of Firoze Tughluq. Afif writes that on his death

> "all Delhi went into mourning, and crowded the mosques and tombs...The sultan was greatly affected at his death and wept bitterly; and he resolved in his mind that he would never more ride forth on any great enterprise."[67]

After the death of Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul, his son Juna Khan was promoted *wazir* and granted the title of his illustrious father by sultan Firoze Tughluq. Khan-i-Jahan Juna Khan was no match to his father in calibre; nevertheless, he acted as the prime minister of Firoze Tughluq with devotion for the next twenty years and was popularly known as '*Khan i Jahan*, son of *Khan i Jahan*'.

No wonder, Khan i Jahan Maqbul and his family made a great contribution towards the initial administrative achievements of sultan Firoze Tughluq; the peace and prosperity of his reign during the first two decades is unintelligible unless the services rendered by Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul to the throne are taken into consideration.

66. According to Afif, Khan-i-Jahan

> had numerous sons, and the sultan made a provision that every son born to him should, from his birth, receive an allowance of 11,000 tankas (p.a.) for his maintenance; he also provided that every daughter on her marriage should receive an allowance of 15,000 *tankas*. His sons and sons-in-law, all wore caps and white waistbands, and his magnificence reached to such a pitch that the sultan was often heard to say that Khan-i-Jahan was the grand and magnificent king of Delhi.
>
> —*Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; pp. 368-69.

67. *ibid*; p. 371.

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Domestic Policy: Administrative Reforms and Public Welfare Activities

Firoze Tughluq inherited a truncated empire, infected with widespread revolts and disorder. The civil services had been crippled and the royal treasury was empty. The people in general had been suffering and simmering with discontent under the oppressive regime of his predecessor. Firoze Tughluq's immediate task was to pacify the subjects and restore law and order. He handled the situation very tactfully and initiated a state policy on a conciliatory note. Khwaja Fakhr Shadi, the accountant general (*majmuadar*) of the finance ministry had faithfully maintained the registers of those who had been advanced loans by Muhammad bin Tughluq to the tune of two *crores* of rupees 'for the purpose of restoring the land, villages and quarters which had fallen into ruin during the famine'.[68] He also presented to the sultan the detailed lists of those nobles and citizens of Delhi who had received bounties from Khwaja-i-Jahan as a price for extending the support to his puppet sultan. On the advice of his prime minister Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul, the sultan wrote off all the debts of the agriculturists and others. He did not take any action against those who had collaborated with Khwaja-i-Jahan nor asked them to return the wealth they had acquired from him. The records of debts and lists of the collaborators were brought in the open court, and actually thrown in water and destroyed[69] to the great relief of the people. Firoze Tughluq traced the victims of Muhammad bin Tughluq's tyranny and relieved their distress; he obtained deeds of satisfaction from them which were buried in the tomb of the sultan, apparently 'to ensure peace to the departed soul' and help it 'on the Day of Judgement.' This action of Firoze Tughluq, though based on a blind religious conviction, proved very helpful to him in winning the confidence and support of the masses; in a way, the sultan recounted the oppressive deeds of his predecessor and made amends for them.

Firoze Tughluq revised the penal code by softening the punishments which were made more humane; brutal punishments based on physical torture and amputation of organs were abolished.[70] The judicial set up was overhauled and even-handed

68. Afif, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; pp. 287.
69. *ibid*; p. 287-88.
70. "In the reigns of former kings, . . many varieties of torture were employed. Amputation of hands and feet, ears and noses, tearing out the eyes, pouring molten lead into the throat, crushing the bones of the hands and feet with mallets, burning the body with fire, driving iron nails into the hands, feet and bosom, cutting the sinews, sawing men asunder; these and many similar tortures were practised. The great and merciful God made me, His servant, hope and seek for His mercy by devoting myself to prevent the unlawful killing of musalmans, and the infliction of any kind of torture upon them or upon any men."
—*Futuhat i Firoze Shahi. E&D*, III.

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justice administered to all. The sultan increased the salaries of the civil servants and the army. By way of an innovation, he ordered that instead of mentioning the name of the reigning sovereign alone, the names of all the important sultans of Delhi be referred to in the Friday *khutba*, read at the *Jama Masjid* of the capital.[71]

Fiscal Reforms: The next problem that confronted Firoze Tughluq was the near economic bankruptcy of the state; he was conscious of the fact that, in order to obtain stability of his rule, general economic health of the country should be improved, royal treasury replenished and the financial credit of the government restored. He, therefore, took keen interest in the revenue establishment though he was not an expert in financial affairs by any means. He throroughly revised the fiscal policy of his predecessors with the twin objects of ensuring adequate state revenues and reducing the burden on the tax payers. He imparted a theocratic tinge to the taxation policy by abolishing as many as twenty-three cesses, including the unpopular grazing and the house taxes. According to the sanction of the Islamic law, only four taxes were retained; these were *kharaj*, *zakat*, *jizya* and *khams*.[72] The rate of *kharaj*—the land revenue, was considerably lowered and brought to one-tenth of the estimated produce, to the great relief of the agriculturists. The earlier sultans of Delhi, particularly Alauddin Khalji, used to acquire from the soldiers four-fifth of the booty obtained during the war as *khams*, but Firoze Tughluq, following strictly the Islamic injunctions, reversed the ratio and wanted his soldiers to pay only one-fifth of such spoils to the state exchequer;[73] the soldiery must have benefited immensely from this measure. On the other hand, in order to show his religious zeal, the sultan extended the scope of the *jizya* by levying it on the brahmins also, who had previously been exempt from this tax. At a later stage, Firoze Tughluq introduced, with the approval of the theologians, an irrigation tax at ten per cent of the produce of the lands which were irrigated by the state-constructed canals. The sultan deputed Khwaja Hisamuddin Junaid to prepare a rough estimate of the public revenues of the state. He, accompanied by a large body of the staff, travelled through the kingdom for six years and, after examining the revenue records of the various provinces, assessed the revenue expected from the *khalsa* lands (under the direct administrative control of the centre) at six *crore*

Thanks for God's mercies I will show,
By causing men nor pain nor woe."

—*ibid*; p. 375.

71. The list included the name of Shihabuddin Muhammad Ghori but excluded that of Qutubuddin Aibek.
72. Sultan Firoze Shah Tughluq, *Futuhat i Firoze Shahi*; *E&D*, III, p. 377. For elaboration, refer to chapter 10 of the present study.
73. *Futuhat i Firoze Shahi*; *op. cit*; para 4, p. 377.

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and eighty-five *lakh tankas*. Various rough and ready methods, based on local traditions and customs, were adopted for the assessment of land revenue; the scientific principles of the measurement of land and determination of the state demand on the actual produce of the soil, were totally discarded. Nevertheless, Firoze Tughluq attempted to prescribe the state demand on a more or less permanent basis. It helped him in ensuring a steady flow of revenues into the exchequer and regulating the expenditure of the state in accordance with the income.

Firoze Tughluq permitted the collection of *jizya* through coercive means; otherwise, his revenue officials were under strict intstructions not to make demands 'in excess of the regular government dues', and those found guilty of 'any such exaction' had to make 'full reparation'.[74] Firoze Tughluq's motto was:

> "Better a people's weal than treasures vast,
> Better an empty chest than hearts downcast."[75]

The interests of the agriculturists were well-protected during the regime of Firoze Tughluq. The sultan constructed four or five fine canals which irrigated a large tract of land in the vicinity of Delhi, including Hissar (mod. Haryana). New agricultural settlements sprang up along the banks of these canals. According to Afif, 150 wells were sunk at state expense to provide drinking water to the travellers and for irrigation. Firoze Tughluq is said to have laid out 1200 state-managed fruit gardens in the neighbourhood of the capital. Their produce was sold in the open market; it brought substantial income to the exchequer besides providing rich and nutritive food to the royal household and the populace of Delhi. Firoze Tughluq also helped in the extension and promotion of internal trade and commerce by abolishing vexatious taxes and reducing the octroi duties. All these measures benefited the country immensely; agricultural production increased, trade and commerce was revived and the countryside rehabilitated where the '*raiyats* grew rich and were satisfied'. It warded off the famines and ushered in an era of peace and prosperity. We have it on the testimony of Afif that

> "abundance of the necessaries of life prevailed in the reign of Firoze Shah, not only in the capital, but throughout his dominions. During the whole forty years of his reign, there was no appearance of scarcity, and the times were so happy that the people of Delhi forgot the reign of Alauddin, although no more prosperous times than this (*sic*) had ever fallen to the lot of any Muhammadan sovereign."[76]

74. Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firoze Shahi*; pp. 289-90.
75. *Futuhat*; p. 377.
76. Afif, *loc. cit*; p. 344.

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Afif makes an interesting comparison between the 'plenty and cheapness' that prevailed during the reigns of Alauddin Khalji and Firoze Tughluq as follows:

> "In the reign of Alauddin, the necessaries of life were abundant through excellent management, but through the favour of God, grain continued cheap throughout the reign of Firoze Shah, without any effort on his part. Grain was so cheap that, in the city of Delhi, wheat was eight *jitals* a *man*, and gram and barley four *jitals* a *man*. A camp follower could give his horse a feed of ten *sirs* (seers) of corn (*dalida*) for one *jital*. Fabrics of all kinds were cheap, and silk goods, both white and coloured, were of moderate price."[77]

Firoze Tughluq's agrarian policy was in no way progressive or scientific. Instead of streamlining the state machinery in the matters of revenue assessment and collection, the sultan entrusted the work to the bidders, contractors and middlemen. The revenue officials were liberally provided but through rent-free land grants. Firoze Tughluq revived the *jagir* system with a vengeance; the whole kingdom was parcelled out into fiefs and the fiefs into districts which were held by the regional and local government officials almost as personal estates. In addition to the land grants, the nobility as well as the bureaucracy received fat allowances which enabled them to accumulate large fortunes. The nobles enjoyed considerable powers in the internal administrative affairs of their rent-free holdings which cut at the very roots of the uniformity of administration and integrity of the central authority. The system of granting lands or assignments (*itlak*) upon the revenues were extended even to the junior ranks which did an incalculable harm, in the long run, to the army establishment as well as the state. The soldiers on active duty were unable to collect the revenues by themselves and sold out their assignment deeds at a discount to the professional revenue collectors or middlemen. Afif writes that

> "It was the practice of certain persons in those days to buy up these assignments, which was an accommodation to both parties. They used to give one-third of the value for them in city and receive one-half in the districts. The purchasers of these assignments carried on a traffic in them, and gaining a good profit, many of them got rich and made their fortunes."[78]

This evil practice robbed the soldiers of their officially declared emoluments, sapped the vitality of the state and ultimately ruined the cultivators as they were fleeced by the contractors

77. *ibid*; p. 345.
78. *ibid*; pp. 345-46.

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and middlemen who grew more and more influential and powerful with the passage of time; in the absence of a strong incentive and support from the centre, the officials could do pretty little against them. The agrarian reforms of Firoze Tughluq, therefore, did more harm than good to the peasants as well as the state economy in the long run.

Public Welfare Works : Sultan Firoze Tughluq was a great philanthropist; he exerted himself for the well-being of his subjects. While referring to his public welfare activities, he spoke in the tone of a religious bigot who apparently intended to do everything for his co-religionists; *albeit* many of his philanthropic deeds benefited all the people—muslims as well as hindus alike. He regarded the uplift of the poor and the downtrodden as his religious and moral duty. In the *Futuhat i Firoze Shahi*, which was, in fact, a written sermon, delivered to the Friday mass of the *jama masjid* of Firozabad, the sultan expressed the desire that

> "to the best of my human power, I should recount and pay my thanks for the many blessings God has bestowed upon me so that I may be found among the number of his servants."[79]

Firoze Tughluq set up a separate department, called the *diwan i khairat*, for the help of the poor and the needy (*fukra wa maskin*). One of its functions was to make arrangements for the marriages of the poor muslim girls at state expense. God-fearing and extremely humble in his disposition, the sultan paid regard to the holymen, repaired the tombs of the *sufi* saints, created endowment funds through grant of lands for the maintenance of *khangahs* and looked after the comforts of the *fakirs* and all those devoted to religious pursuits. He introduced the practice of granting old-age pensions, and opened an employment bureau to find work for the unemployed. Of course, a step of misplaced generosity taken by Firoze Tughluq was that he began to offer civil and military services persons pension for life, and some of the higher offices were made almost hereditary.[80] He ran charitable kitchens to provide free food to the poor, constructed *serais* along

79. *Futuhat i Firoze Shahi*; *E&D*, III, p. 375.
80. In the words of sultan Firoze Tughluq.

> "When any government servant filling an important and responsible position was carried off under the decrees of God to the happy future life, I gave his place and employment to his son so that he might occupy the same position and rank as his father and suffer no injury."
>
> 'Kings should make their rule of life
> To love the great and wise;
> And when death ends this mortal strife,
> To dry their loved ones' eyes.'
>
> —*ibid.*, p. 387.

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the roads and opened rest houses for the pilgrims 'resorting to the tombs of illustrious kings and celebrated saints'. The sultan himself writes that

> "for providing the things necessary in these holy places, I confirmed and gave effect to the grants of villages, lands, and other endowments which had been conferred upon them in olden times. In those cases where no endowment or provision had been settled, I made an endowment, so that these establishments might for ever be secure of an income, to afford comfort to travellers and wayfarers, to holy men and learned men."[81]

Firoze Tughluq opened a magnificent charitable hospital (*daru sh shifa*) in the capital for the benefit of 'all sick persons, residents and travellers, gentle and simple, bond and free'.[82] Qualified physicians were appointed to attend to the outdoor as well as indoor patients who were supplied free medicines and food. The provincial officers were expected to emulate the example of the sultan in opening such charitable institutions and hospitals within the areas of their jurisdiction.

As a benevolent ruler, the sultan constructed canals, repaired the old tanks and dug wells to irrigate the fields and provide water for drinking and washing purposes. The grand *Houz i Ilahi* or tank of Alauddin Khalji in Delhi had been put into disuse and was filled up with earth. The people 'carried on cultivation in it and had dug wells, of which they sold water'.[83] The sultan 'cleaned it out so that this great tank might again be filled from year to year'. Similarly, the *Houz i Shams* or tank of Iltutmish had been 'deprived of water by some graceless men, who stopped up the channels of supply'. Firoze Tughluq punished those 'incorrigible men severely, and opened again the closed up channels'[84] for the public benefit.

Firoze Tughluq took keen interest in the promotion of education and learning. He was a great patron of scholars and writers; the *maulvis* and the *ulema* received liberal subsistence allowances from the state. He opened many schools (*maktabs*) and colleges (*madrasas*) in important towns; these and the numerous elementary schools attached to the mosques throughout the sultanate were liberally provided by the state. The *madrasa* of sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish in the capital had been closed and its building lay in ruins. Firoze Tughluq reconstructed the building, 'furnished it with sandal-wood doors'[85] and transformed

81. *Futuhat i Firozeshahi*; p. 385.
82. *ibid.*
83. *ibid*; p. 383.
84. *ibid.*
85. *ibid.*

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it into a living institution of higher learning once again. The *Firoze Shahi Madrasa* at Firozabad, though newly founded, rose to be a magnificent university which surpassed all other *madrasas* of the time in academic attainments; most of the educational institutions promoted Islamic studies. It is said that Firoze Tughluq got some Sanskrit books, particularly dealing with religious philosophy and astrology, translated into Persian; the translation of one such work, acquired from the conquest of Nagarkot, was entitled *Dalayal i Firoze Shahi*.[86]

Firoze Tughluq carried out extensive reforms in the minting of coins. The poor quality of coins produced by Muhammad bin Tughluq had encouraged the imitators and forgers to let down the state currency. It seems to have left a deep imprint on the mind of Firoze Tughluq who was ever eager to improve the quality of coins so as to restore their credit with the people. Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul, the prime minister, when asked by the sultan to express his opinion on the subject, once observed that

> "the coinage of kings like an unmarried daughter, whom no one would seek after, however beautiful and charming she might be, if any aspersion had, either rightly or wrongly been cast upon her character. So also with royal coins; if any one honestly or falsely, from interested motives, alleged a deterioration of the coinage, the insinuation would spread, the coinage would obtain a bad name, and no one would take it."[87]

The idea of token currency had thus failed to carry conviction with the people; nevertheless, the state currency had sanctity of its own. The gold and silver coins, though based originally on the intrinsic value of the metals contained therein ought to be such that they should not lose credibility of the people with the fluctuations in their price level year after year. Being conscious of this fact, Firoze Tughluq improved the technique of minting and issued several varieties of standard coins. Besides the gold and silver *tankas* he produced beautiful coins of the respective value of forty-eight (*chihal o hashtgani*), twenty-five, twenty-four, twelve, ten, eight and six (*shashgani*) *jittals*, which contained silver in due proportions, mixed with the other metals. He produced in abundance the fractional currency of the lowest denominations all made of copper and bronze; it comprised a *jittal*, a *jittal* called *adha*, and a quarter *jittal* called *bikh*, to facilitate transactions in trade and commerce at mass level. Much of the fractional currency used by the public in their daily transactions was nothing but token in character, yet it enjoyed full confidence of the people. That is how Firoze Tughluq tactfully

86. Firishta (Briggs), I, pp. 454-62.
87. Afif, *Tarikh i Firozeshahi*; p. 358.

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transformed minting into a 'source of income' for the state. None raised an eyebrow nor mistrusted the intentions of the sultan when he popularised the extensive circulation of the token currency; the use of pure gold and silver coins was confined to the business and state transactions at the highest levels only.

Firoze Tughluq was a builder *par excellence*. He founded new cities, added new townships to the existing urban habitats, built forts, palaces, mosques, tombs, water reservoirs *caravan serais*, bridges, canals, public baths, laid out gardens, and opened schools, colleges, hospitals and charity houses. He founded the cities of Fatehabad, Hissar Firoza (mod. Hissar), Jaunpur and Firozabad, now known as Kotla Firozshah, a part of the metropolis. The sultan showed keen interest in the preservation of old monuments and carried out extensive repairs to most of the tombs and public buildings of his predecessors. Though ignorant of the real significance of the Ashokan pillars, Firoze Tughluq got two of them brought to Delhi—one from Topra (district Ambala) and the other from Meerut, and transplanted them at the new township of Firozabad.

Firoze Tughluq is said to have established 36 state-owned factories (*karkhanas*) for the manufacture of various accessories of life and luxurious goods for use by the royalty and the public. These were managed by a special branch of the *diwan i wazarat*, called the *diwan khana*. The labour force was provided by the slaves who were imparted technical training so that they might become useful members of the society. Consciously or unconsciously, Firoze Tughluq gave an inducement to the expansion of the system of slavery or bonded labour. He is said to have 1,80,000 slaves who were attached to the royal establishment alone; 40,000 of them mounted guards at the royal palace for the defence of the capital and protection of the royal family. The sultan encouraged the practice of enslaving the prisoners of war and sometimes organised raids into the territories of the 'infidel' principalities simply with the object of securing slaves who were forcibly converted to Islam. The provincial governors and nobility were under instructions to supply more and more of the slaves as a part of their royal liabilities or annual tribute. The sultan demanded unqualified loyalty and service from the slaves; though paid liberally by the sultan, most of them did not reconcile themselves to the loss of personal liberties nor did they develop the feelings of loyalty to the ruling family or the state. They served the sultan during his life time but wreaked their vengeance upon the members of the royal family after his death; they unhesitatingly chopped off the heads of the princes and hung them at the gates of the royal court.

Firoze Tughluq was an orthodox *sunni musalman*; he resorted to religious bigotry as a matter of state policy, *albeit* by virtue of his gentle and humane nature, he could not afford to be cruel and

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inhuman towards the non-muslims in actual practice. He suffered from an inferiority complex that he had been born of a hindu mother; therefore, in order to establish his credibility as the sovereign of an 'Islamic state' and leader of the 'faithful', he publicly demonstrated contempt for Hinduism and displayed extraordinary zeal for Islam. He was equally intolerant of the *shias* and other muslim dissenters. He always attempted to win the goodwill and support of the *ulema* and extended the influence of theologians in the state affairs.

Foreign Policy and Defence

Firoze Tughluq was essentially a man of peace; he abhored war and bloodshed. Even otherwise, he was a poor military general who had neither the courage nor skill to undertake extensive military campaigns. He inherited a fast disintegrating empire but did not show eagerness to bring back all the lost territories into the fold of the *sultanate*. He displayed no fondness for conquests. Most of the military campaigns undertaken by him proved unsuccessful and exposed the poor organisational skill, lack of direction and incompetence of the sultan as a general. He never contemplated the reconquest of the Deccan peninsula which was cut off from the *sultanate* of Delhi for ever.

Bengal had become independent during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq; Firoze Tughluq made two abortive attempts to reconquer it. The first expedition against Bengal was organised by him in 1353-54. Haji Ilyas, the ruler of Bengal, was defeated in a bloody encounter but he fled the field and took shelter in the fort of Ikdala. It was promptly besieged by the royal troops led by Tatar Khan, the commander in chief. When the victory was in sight, however, 'the shrieks and wails' of women of the fort aroused the feelings of compassion in the heart of the sultan, and he raised the siege on the plea that

> "to storm the fort, put more *musalmans* to the sword, and expose honourable women to ignominy, would be a crime for which he could not answer on the Day of Judgement, and which would leave no difference between him and the monogls."[88]

The sultan lacked the courage to pursue the task and returned to the capital empty-handed to the great chagrin of the military generals and soldiers while he made himself a laughing stock of the people.

Haji Ilyas died in 1359 and was succeeded by his son Sikander Khan as the ruler of Bengal. The arrival of a few disaffected Bengali nobles in Delhi, who pleaded with the sultan to intervene on

88. Afif, *Tarikh i Firozeshahi*, p. 297.

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their behalf, prompted the latter to make yet another attempt to recover Bengal. In 1359-60, he led a grand army which consisted of 70,000 cavalry, innumerable infantry, 470 warlike elephants and many barrier-breaking boats[89] for the achievement of his objective. Sikander Khan was also besieged in Ikdala but the royal forces, in spite of their best efforts, were unable to conquer the fort. To the dismay and humiliation of the military generals, the sultan was compelled to raise the siege and recognise the independence of Bengal for all times to come. On his return from Bengal, Firoze Tughluq subjugated the hindu ruler of Orissa, then called Jajnagar, just by way of boosting the morale of his otherwise demoralised and disheartened soldiers. The two unsuccessful expeditions to Bengal resulted in the wastage of the already dilapidated resources of the sultanate in men and signalled the deterioration of the royal army.

Firoze Tughluq led an expedition (1360-61) for the conquest of Nagarkot (Kangra) whose hindu ruler had reasserted his independence after the death of Muhammad bin Tughluq. The *raja* was besieged in the fort while the town of Nagarkot was occupied by the royal army and put to plunder; the historic temple of Jawalamukhi was desecrated. The *raja* defended himself heroically for six months and ultimately got rid of the invader by offering nominal submission on the promise to pay annual tribute to Delhi.

The last military campaign of Firoze Tughluq was directed against Sind (1362-63) which was then ruled by Jam Babiniya with his headquarters at Thatta. The sultan laid siege to the fort but failed to conquer it; meanwhile, the outbreak of plague and famine wiped out a quarter of the royal army. Panic-stricken, the sultan ordered the retreat of his army towards Gujarat as a measure of relief but misled it into the dry and barren Rann of Kutch which took a further toll of life of the soldiers, their horses and beasts of burden. But for the timely receipt of reinforcements and provision, from Khan-i-Jahan, the prime minister in charge of Delhi, the entire royal army would have perished. Jam Babiniya felt alarmed on the reapperance of the sultan with his troops from the Rann and thought it prudent to offer his submission. He was deposed and replaced by a member of his family as the feudatory chief under the nominal suzerainty of Delhi. The military power of the ruling house of Sind remained intact; the new Jam asserted his independence after some time and Sind was cut off from the sultanate of Delhi for ever. Thus the Sind expedition, like those of Bengal, also proved a total failure; it gave a serious blow to the prestige and military prowess of the sultanate. The sultan felt so much disheartened and demoralised by the mishandling of the military

89. Afif, *Tarikh i Firozeshahi*; p. 305.

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affairs that he never took courage to command an expedition thereafter.

The army establishment of the Tughluq was based on feudal principles; the bulk of the contingents of infantry and horsemen were provided by nobles and the feudal chieftains, *albeit* Firoze Tughluq inherited a standing army of eighty to ninety thousand regular (*wajihi*) troopers from his predecessor. In addition, the sultan created 40,000 mounted guards from among his slaves for the protection of the royal household. A large number of mercenaries were recruited on contract on lump-sum payments during the course of major campaigns. According to the old Islamic tradition, Firoze Tughluq had recognised the right of every soldier to retain four-fifths of the spoils; it afforded a great temptation to the people to offer themselves for military service to the state. The sultan was exceptionally lucky to have acquired the services of some brilliant military organisers and generals in the beginning of his reign; his commander-in-chief Tatar Khan, *ariz-i-mamalik* Malik Bashir entitled Imadul Mulk, and *naib ariz-i-mamalik* Malik Razi handled the affairs of the army with professional skill and competence; and maintained a fairly good standard of the royal forces so long as they were at the helm of affairs. With the passage of time, however, the ill-conceived, short-sighted and unprofessional measures adopted by Firoze Tughluq, 'marred the discipline and efficiency of the army'.[90] Instead of paying the salaries in cash, the sultan adopted the practice of granting *jagirs* to the nobles and transferable assignments on land revenue to the troopers. Acting under a false notion of humane considerations, the sultan retained the armed personnel in formal service of the state for life and began to appoint military commanders on hereditary basis, thus bringing into existence a large number of incompetent and inefficient office-holders. He 'discarded the regulation regarding the record of descriptive rolls, and encouraged absenteeism and proxy' as well as the 'evasion of annual muster roll'.[91] The entire army establishment came to be infested with the evils of corruption, favouritism and nepotism. These evils seriously undermined the discipline and striking power of the army, sapped its martial spirit and gradually converted it into a motley crowd of parasites and drones in the garb of soldiers, led by hereditary military landlords of little professional skill or zeal. The offensive power of the royal army had been lost during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq; its defensive teeth were mercilessly broken by Firoze Tughluq through callous disregard of the most elementary principles of the army organisation. Of course, Firoze Tughluq was personally responsible for the decay and deterioration of the once mighty and 'invincible army' of the sultanate; 'the great and historic army of the Delhi empire

90. R.C. Jauhri, *Firoze Tughluq*; *op. cit*; p. 121.
91. *ibid.*

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gradually ceased to exist';[92] and with its disappearance was sealed the fate of the tughluq dynasty as well as the sultanate of Delhi.

The concluding years of Firoze Tughluq's reign 'were full of tragedies, troubles and turmoils';[93] which he was constrained to witness owing to his long and inactive life. The advanced age and falling health incapacitated the sultan by 1375-76, necessitating the delegation of royal powers to the ambitious and arrogant hereditary prime minister Khan-i-Jahan Juna Khan. The first two sons of Firoze Tughluq predeceased the sultan while his third son Muhammad Khan did not pull on nicely with the prime minister. The latter conspired to liquidate the prince but was himself killed instead. It triggered off a civil war between the rival claimants to the throne while the sultan was still alive. He breathed his last on September 20, 1388 and was succeeded by his inexperienced, incompetent and pleasure-seeking grandson Tughluq Shah. The successors of Firoze Tughluq, being non-entities, do not deserve place among the sovereign rulers of the country.

92. *Comp. HI*, V, p. 606.
93. Jauhri, *Firoze Tughluq*; p. 180.

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8

Decline and Disintegration

The Later Tughluqs

Firoze Tughluq was the last great sultan of Delhi; with him departed the glory of the sultanate. The process of its decay and disintegration, which had begun during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq, gained momentum under Firoze Tughluq, and the once mighty turkish empire of India was reduced to a petty principality of Delhi within a decade of the latter's death. Still known as the sultanate of Delhi, it suffered the pangs of death during the next century and a quarter. All the six successors of Firoze Tughluq, including a son and five grandsons, who sat on the throne of Delhi, were phantom rulers who wielded neither substantial sovereign powers nor possessed sufficient territories under their effective control. Amir Timur's invasion of 1398 took away the last semblance of royalty professed by the princes of the tughluq dynasty. The sultanate exhibited a sign of recovery under the Lodhis *albeit* that was like 'the last flicker of the dying lamp';[1] the guns of Babar sounded the death-knell of the sultanate in the first historic battle of Panipat on April 21, 1526.

The Later Tughluqs[2] (1388-1414)

Firoz Tughluq was succeeded by one of his grandsons—Tughluq Shah, who assumed the title of Ghiasuddin Tughluq II. He was a son of Fateh Khan, the eldest son of Firoz Tughluq, who had died (1374 A.D.) during the lifetime of his father. Being an inexperienced and pleasure-seeking youth, he failed to establish his hold over the royal household and the court. His claim to the throne was disputed by prince Muhammad Shah, the third surviving son of Firoz Tughluq and some other members of the royal family; they were supported

1. K.S. Lal, *Twilight of the Sultanate*; APH, 1963; p. 1.
2. For the most reliable account of the successors of Firoze Tughluq by the near contemporary source, refer to Firishta (Briggs), I, pp. 466-84.

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by the rival factions of nobility at the court. Ghiasuddin Tughluq II fell a victim to the intrigues and was beheaded on February 19, 1389.

Ghiasuddin Tughluq II was succeeded by Abu Bakr,[3] another grandson of Firoze Tughluq, on the throne of Delhi while Muhammad Shah set up as an independent ruler with his headquarters at Samana. It triggered off a civil war between the two rival claimants to the throne, in which Muhammad Shah scored a victory and made a triumphant entry into the capital in August 1390. Abu Bakr was imprisoned in the fort of Meerut where he died after some time. Sultan Muhammad Shah failed to muster support of the provincial governors and died of ill-health in January 1394. His son and successor Humayun ascended the throne with the title of Alauddin Sikander Shah; he was the fourth prince to sit on the throne of Delhi after Firoze Tughluq. He died a premature death in March 1394. A faction of the nobles installed his younger brother, then hardly a lad of ten, on the throne of Delhi, with the title of Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah. A rival party put up Nusrat Shah,[4] another prince of the tughluq dynasty, as the sultan at Firozabad—a suburb of the capital; thus the metropolis of Delhi came to have two sultans. The rival factions grinned at each other with drawn-out swords and occasionally the streets of Delhi were smeared with blood while their puppet sultans wore the crowns like the clowns and played hide and seek with each other like the proverbial 'kings of the game of chess'. This state of affairs continued for about three years 'with astonishing equality; for if one monarch's party had at any time the superiority, the balance was soon restored by the neutral chiefs'.[5] As a result, 'the government fell into anarchy; civil war raged everywhere; and a scene was exhibited, unheard of before, of two kings in arms against each other residing in the same capital.'[6]

Many of the provincial governors and military generals took little interest in the fratricidal war that raged between the rival claimants to the throne of Delhi; instead, they sat on the fence for a while, occasionally giving a hand in confusing the issues and protracting the civil war. Then they diverted their attention away from the strife-torn capital and asserted their independence; the feudal hindu chieftains and landlords also followed suit and attempted to carve out independent principalities and estates for themselves. In the process, the sultanate of Delhi was itself reduced to a small regional state, ravaged by the rival armies of the tughluq

3. Son of Zafar Khan, the second son of Firoze Tughluq, who had also predeceased his father.
4. The youngest brother of Ghiasuddin Tughluq II and son of Fateh Khan, the eldest son of Firoze Tughluq.
5. Firishta (Briggs), I, p. 481.
6. *ibid.*

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princes whose collective sway did not extend beyond the suburbs of Delhi and a part of the Doab.

Towards the fall of 1397, news was received that the advance-guard of Amir Timur of Samarqand had crossed the Indus and followed the southwesterly course towards Uchh and Multan. It aggravated the civil war between the supporters of Nusrat Shah and Mahmud Shah for mastery over Delhi. Nusrat Shah fled the capital after about two months' life and death struggle and sought shelter in the Doab while Delhi was left in the hands of Mahmud Shah's party, led by Mallu Iqbal; the latter was the *de facto* ruler and the sultan a mere puppet in his hands. Mallu Iqbal and sultan Mahmud Tughluq put up a feeble resistance against Amir Timur but failed to stem the tide and took to their heels, leaving the populace of Delhi at the mercy of the invader. Delhi and its people were robbed, disgraced and made to pay the price in blood as if for having tolerated, with an attitude of indifference, the misrule of incompetent and worthless successors of Firoze Tughluq.

After the return of Timur, sultan Nusrat Shah was the first to enter Delhi and claim sovereignty over the ravaged town in March 1399. He was followed close upon his heels by Mallu Iqbal, and the old feud was revived over the debris of the once flourishing human dwellings and decaying corpses of the victims of Timur. Nusrat Shah was turned out of Delhi once again and forever; deserted by his followers and king-makers, he died in ignominy somewhere in Mewat.

Mallu Khan reasserted his authority over the suburbs of Delhi and a part of the Doab, *albeit* he did not dare to assume the title of the sultan as some members of the erstwhile ruling house of the tughluqs were still in the field who claimed the estate of Delhi as their ancestral heritage. In 1401, he called back sultan Mahmud Tughluq from his wanderings in Gujarat and Malwa and attempted to exploit his name for the establishment of a strong kingdom for himself. The time had, however, changed; Mahmud, now a grown-up youth, refused to play as a tool in his hands and claimed the sovereignty of Delhi in his own right. They fell out with each other, resulting in the expulsion of Mahmud from Delhi; the latter retreated to Kanauj, captured the town by force and set up his court there. Mallu Iqbal was killed in an encounter with Khizr Khan[7] of Multan in 1405, which enabled Mahmud Tughluq to stage a come back to Delhi. To his great chagrin, a new set of king-makers, led by one Daulat Khan, emerged on the scene and compelled Mahmud to be content with his position as the puppet sultan of Delhi. Totally disheartened and disillusioned by these developments, sultan Mahmud resorted to drinking and debauchery and died a

7. Later the founder of the Sayyad dynasty.

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physical and mental wreck in 1412[8]; he was the last turkish sultan of Delhi.

During the next year and a half, Daulat Khan was the *de facto* ruler of Delhi. He did not assume any royal title; instead, he continued to strike coins in the name of the tughluqs till March 1414 when Delhi was besieged by the army of Khizr Khan of Multan. Daulat Khan suffered a defeat and died in captivity at Hissar while Khizr Khan ascended the throne of Delhi on May 28, 1414 and laid the foundation of the Sayyad dynasty so called.

Invasion of Amir Timur (1398-99)

Northern India fell a victim to the fury of Amir Timur and his marauding hordes in 1398-99. Nicknamed *Timur-i-Lang*[9]—'Timur the Lame', he was one of the greatest monarchs of central Asia, the second most barbaric, blood-thirsty and awe-inspiring warrior after Chengiz Khan, who sat on the throne of Samarqand. He was born in 1336 at Kesh or *shahr i sabz*—'the green city', situated about 50 miles to the south of Samarqand. His mother's name was Taghina Khatun while his father Amir Turghay was the chief of the gurgan[10] or chaghtai branch of the barlas turks. After the death of his father (1361 A.D.), he had to fight a life and death struggle against his own kith and kin for about a decade until he was acknowledged chief of the chaghtai turks and ascended the throne at Samarqand in 1370. He waged ruthless wars against the adjoining countries and established his sway over the whole of central Asia, including Persia and Afghanistan; it is said that during the ceaseless warfare carried on by him for over thirty-five years after 1370, he never suffered defeat in any battle.

Amir Timur thought of invading India in 1397 with the two-fold object of waging a holy war against the 'infidels'[11] and laying

8. Firishta (Briggs), I, p. 504.
9. He was wounded (1363 A.D.) by an arrow in the leg during an encounter with a Siestani army in southern Afghanistan, which maimed him for life; therefore, he became known as *Aksak* (one who limps) among his turkish enemies while the Persians called him *Timur-i-Lang*; the term was corrupted in its use by the European scholars into *Tamarlane*.
10. From *gurg*—'a wolf' which was the insignia of the ruling family of Timur; his great grand-father (Qarachar Nuyan) was *wazir* of Chaghtai Khan.
11. Between the two proposed targets—China and India, his counsellors expressed themselves in favour of Indian invasion. About his main objective in launching this campaign, Amir Timur writes in his memoirs :

> "My object in the invasion of Hindustan is to lead an expedition against the infidels...we may convert to the true faith the people of that country, and purify the land from the filth of infidelity and polytheism; and that we may overthrow their temples and idols and become *ghazis* and *mujahids* before God."
>
> —*Tuzuk i Timuri*; E&D. III, p. 397.

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his hands upon the fabulous wealth of the country.[12] His mouth must have watered to hear of the treasure-trove of 'the golden sparrow of the east' about whose immense wealth he attempts to form a mental picture by chewing the figures of its state revenues :

> "My *wazirs* informed me that the whole amount of the revenue of India is six *arbs*; now each *arb* is a 100 *krors*, and each *kror* is a 100 *lacs*, and each *lac* is a 100,000 *miskals* of silver.[13]

The political anarchy that prevailed in India facilitated his task. He received report[14] about the civil strife between the Indian nobles, and the collapse of the central authority of Delhi, from his grandson Pir Muhammad who led the advance-guard from Kabul into India towards the end of 1397. He crossed the unguarded Khyber pass without any opposition and led his army along the Indus. After the conquest of Uchh, he laid siege to Multan, then held by Sarang Khan, a brother of Mallu Khan, the *de facto* ruler of Delhi. The besieged garrison offered a gallant resistance to the invader and the siege was protracted. It was here that Pir Muhammad wrote[15] to Amir Timur and sought his advice and support. Timur's previous resolution regarding the invasion of India was 'confirmed and strengthened', and he left Samarqand at the head of 92,000 cavalry in March 1398; he was then 62. He crossed the Indus in September, defeated the khokhars and then marched towards Multan which was conquered by Pir Muhammad after six months' siege before the arrival of the main army of invasion. Amir Timur carried fire and sword into the southwestern Punjab and ravaged all the important towns including Tulamba, Pakpattan, Dipalpur, Bhatnair, Fatehabad, Sirsa, Sunam, Kaithal and Panipat. He reached in the vicinity of Delhi in December and occupied *Jahannuma*, the palace constructed by Firoze Tughluq on the bank of the Yamuna at a distance of about six miles from old Delhi. A *lakh* of the hindus, taken prisoners from northwestern India by the invaders, were mercilessly put to the sword on the orders of Amir Timur lest they might

12. Prince Muhammad Sultan told Amir Timur that—

> The whole country of India is full of gold and jewels, and in it there are seventeen mines of gold and silver, diamond and ruby and emerald and tin and iron and steel and copper and quicksilver, etc., and of the plants which grow there are those fit for making wearing apparel, and aromatic plants, and the sugar-cane, and it is a country which is always green and verdant, and the whole aspect of the country is pleasant and delightful. Now, since the inhabitants are chiefly polytheists and infidels and idolators and worshippers of the sun, by the order of God and his Prophet, it is right for us to conquer them. *ibid*; pp. 396-97.

13. *Tuzuk i Timuri*; p. 397.

14. *ibid*; pp. 398-99.

15. *ibid*; p. 399.

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create trouble for them during their conflict with the army of Delhi.[16]

Mallu Iqbal and sultan Mahmud Tughluq fought an action with the invaders on December 17, 1398 at the head of 10,000 cavalry, 40,000 foot and 125 elephants but were defeated[17] and fled; Mallu retreated to Bulandshahr while Mahmud escaped to Gujarat. Timur made a triumphant entry into Delhi the next day, the leading citizens and *ulema* of the capital waited upon the victor and sought mercy for the inhabitants. Amir Timur agreed to spare their lives and was accorded reception by the populace of Delhi. He stayed in the capital for fifteen days only. The fabulous wealth of the ex-rulers of Delhi and the nobility, including invaluable treasures, horses and elephants fell into his hands; besides, he received immense wealth and supplies from the citizens as 'the contributions laid upon the city'; *albeit* his turbulent soldiers were bent upon loot and plunder. One day 'a party of fierce turk soldiers', 'laid violent hands upon the goods of the inhabitants',[18] the latter resisted, and in the scuffle that followed, some soldiers of Timur were killed. In a fit of rage, Timur ordered a general massacre of the populace of Delhi. The bloody carnage continued for five days. Amir Timur himself describes the sack of Delhi in the following words :

> The flames of strife were thus lighted and spread through the whole city from Jahanpanah and Siri to Old Delhi. The savage Turks fell to killing and plundering. The Hindus set fire to their houses with their own hands, burned their wives and children in them, and rushed into the fight and were killed. The Hindus and *gabrs* of the city showed much alacrity and boldness in fighting. On that day, Thursday, and all the night of Friday, nearly 15,000 Turks were engaged in slaying, plundering and destroying. When morning broke out on Friday, all my army, no longer under control, went off to the city and thought of nothing but killing, plundering and making prisoners.....
>
> ...the spoil was so great that each man secured from fifty to a hundred prisoners, men, women and children. There was no

16. 'Maulana Nasiruddin Umar, a counsellor and man of learning, who, in all his life, had never killed a sparrow, now, in execution of my order slew with his sword, fifteen idolatrous hindus, who were his captives.'
17. Amir Timur pays tribute to the army of Delhi in the following words :
> The soldiers of sultan Mahmud and Mallu Khan showed no lack of courage, but bore themselves manfully in the fight, still they could not withstand the succesive assaults of my soldiers. Seeing their own plight and that of the soldiers and elephants around them, their courage fell and they took to fight.
>
> —*ibid*; p. 441.
18. *Tuzuk i Timuri*; E&D, III, p. 445.

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man who took less than twenty. The other booty was immense in rubies, diamonds, garnets, pearls and other gems; jewels of gold and silver; *ashrafis*, *tankas* of gold and silver of the celebrated Alai coinage; vessels of gold and silver, and brocades and silks of great value. Gold and silver ornaments of the hindu women were obtained in such quantities as to exceed all account.

Excepting the quarter of the *sayyids*, the *ulema* and the other *musulmans*; the whole city was sacked. The pen of fate had been written down this destiny for the people of this city. Although I was desirous of sparing them, I could not succeed, for it was the will of God that this calamity should fall upon the city.[19]

When a *lakh* of the hungry wolves (gurgans) were let loose upon the defenceless citizens of the metropolis, it is difficult to perceive how they could discriminate between hindus and muslims among the commonfolk, may be some *sayyids* and *maulvis*, because of their distinct physical make-up and garments, were spared their lives. Of course, the prisoners included a large number of the masons and craftsmen, both hindus and muslims, who were taken to central Asia to slave for the victors.

On his return march, Timur sacked the towns of Meerut and Hardwar, and then followed a more northerly route along the foothills. Kangra and Jammu were ravaged *en route* to Lahore where he stayed for a while and made arrangements for the despatch of his troops in a systematic order. Timur appointed Khizr Khan, erstwhile governor of Multan, who had been expelled from there by his rival Sarang Khan, as the governor of Lahore, Multan and Dipalpur. *Tuzuk i Timuri* is silent about the political settlement made for Delhi; Timur never wanted to stay in India; and Delhi being situated far away from Samarqand, could not be held under control by him; therefore, he did not care who ruled over Delhi. Probably, Khizr Khan was authorised by him to act as his viceroy in Delhi also. Heavily laden with booty, the victorious army of Amir Timur crossed back the Indus in March 1399 *en route* to Samarqand. He died in 1405 and was buried in a splendid mausoleum constructed by the Indian craftsmen at Samarqand.

The invasion of Amir Timur had disastrous effects on the political, socio-cultural and economic condition of northern India. Timur descended upon the country as 'a scourge of God' and wrought untold miseries upon its people. The whole of north-western region, including Delhi and a part of the Doab, was trampled under feet by the turkish hordes and robbed of its

19. *ibid*; p. 446.

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incalculable wealth; dozens of big towns were sacked and devastated, hundreds of villages razed to the ground and totally wiped out, and millions of innocent men, women and children put to the sword. The male prisoners were used as beasts of burden to carry the spoils on their heads for their victors to their homelands; many of them died of hunger and fatigue on the way. Thousands of Indian women were enslaved, dishonoured and humiliated.

The cultural and industrial development of northwestern India came to a standstill as a result of the extensive destruction of magnificent monuments, libraries and *karkhanas*. The whole region ransacked by the invaders was deprived of most of the talented craftsmen, artisans, mechanics and artists who were taken as slaves to central Asia. Of course, they constructed public buildings, palaces, forts and mausoleums for their masters and contributed towards the industrial and cultural development of central Asia.

The entire administrative set up of northern India was thrown out of gear by Timur's onslaught. The people who escaped death or enslavement at the hands of his soldiers were left without adequate protection from the defunct governmental authority of the land. Political anarchy encouraged the thieves, highwaymen and other anti-social elements to create havoc among the helpless people. The socio-economic life of the countryside people having been dislocated, the agricultural production stopped resulting in the scarcity of foodstuffs and the rise of prices; Timur left behind famine, disease and misery for the inhabitants of northwestern India. Never before had so much harm been done by any invader to India in a single onslaught; the vandalism displayed by Mahmud of Ghazni during his Indian campaigns pales into insignificance before the atrocities committed by the marauders of Amir Timur on the unarmed and defenceless citizens.

Amir Timur gave a fatal blow to the tughluq dynasty and the sultanate of Delhi. It was an irony of fate that the grand edifice of the sultanate which had been raised by the strenuous efforts of the turkish leader Muhammad Ghori and his brilliant turkish slave generals should be razed to the ground mercilessly, two centuries later, by Amir Timur, the greatest turkish warrior of his day. Delhi, once the metropolis of an extensive Islamic empire in the subcontinent, and the hub of Islamic culture and civilisation to the east of Baghdad, lay in ruins, with its debris, soaked in the blood of its unfortunate citizens. It was not a mere sack of the city by Timur; he insulted, humiliated and disgraced a magnificent creation of the civilised world in a most barbaric and inhuman manner; he robbed the city not only of its wealth but also honour, dignity and self-respect. Delhi stood downgraded in the estimation of the people and lost its glory and prestige as the imperial capital of India for a long time to come. Anarchy prevailed everywhere in the country. The fear of any central authority taking its roots in Delhi in the near future having disappeared, the warlords of average abilities and narrow regional outlooks, raised their heads and started a scramble for

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territorial possessions, thus making the confusion worse confounded. Timur's invasion guaranteed the consolidation and prosperity of two strong kingdoms--Bahmani and Vijayanagar, in the south, *albeit* no such political power emerged in northern and central India which could fill up the vacuum, caused by the decline of the sultanate, on an extensive scale. The process of disintegration of the sultanate into regional states and petty principalities which had begun long before, received a fillip by the invasion of Amir Timur.

One of the declared objectives of Amir Timur had been to destroy the 'infidels' of India *albeit* his army, like a steam-roller, knocked down all the Indians alike, whether hindus or muslims. As a matter of fact, Amir Timur insulted India and its people as a whole, and, like Mahmud of Ghazni, did more harm to the cause of Islam than to the 'infidels' in the subcontinent, it was the turkish sultanate of Delhi which was left prostrate and bleeding, beyond all hopes of recovery.

The Sayyads (1414-50)

Khizr Khan, who had been appointed governor of Lahore, Multan and Dipalpur by Amir Timur, acquired control of Delhi after defeating its *de facto* ruler Daulat Khan and laid the foundation of what is called the Sayyad dynasty. He belonged to a reputed family of devout muslims of Multan, and his father Malik Suleman, an official of the provincial government, was known as a Sayyad.[20] Khizr Khan himself was a man of high moral character who combined in him the qualities of a saint, soldier and politician. He rose to be the governor of Multan during the reign of sultan Firoze Tughluq. He was expelled from the town by Sarang Khan in 1395. He was the most important of the Indian nobles who collaborated with Amir Timur; he received the governorship of Lahore, Multan and Dipalpur as a reward for the services rendered to the invader. After the departure of Timur, he declared himself the viceroy of Amir Timur in northwestern India and defied the authority of Delhi, then ruled by Mallu Khan and sultan Mahmud Tughluq. Mallu was defeated and killed by Khizr Khan in 1405; it strengthened his position and aroused his ambitions. He began to aspire for the throne of Delhi after the death of sultan Mahmud Tughluq; at a suitable opportunity, he invaded Delhi and became its master on June 4, 1414.

Khizr Khan ruled Delhi independently for seven years (1414-21) though he officially described himself as the viceroy of the Timurids; he did not assume sovereign title of sultan or shah nor struck coins in his name. His kingdom, comprising Sind, Punjab

20. Related to the family of the Prophet Mohammad, though it is doubtful whether he had actually descended from the Prophet; probably, his ancestors had hailed from Arabia.

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and some parts of the Doab (western U.P.), though fairly extensive, was one of the numerous regional states which had come into existence in Bengal, Jaunpur, Rajasthan, Malwa, Gujarat, Khandesh and the Deccan peninsula. Throughout his period of rule, Khizr Khan had to fight either against the neighbouring rulers or the rebellious hindu chieftains and muslim nobles within his own dominions. He died on May 20, 1421. Khizr Khan was popular among the people of Delhi because of public welfare activities and humanitarian approach to the administration.

Mubarak Shah, the son and successor of Khizr Khan, assumed the title of sultan. A competent military general, he suppressed a few revolts of the hindu zamindars of the Doab and defeated the muslim nobles—Jasrath Khokhar and Turk-baccha, in the Punjab. He defended his shaky kingdom from encroachments by the rajputs, the muslim rulers of Jaunpur and Malwa, and the mughals from Kabul. He fell a victim to the conspiracy hatched by his own disaffected nobles and was beheaded in February 1434.

The power of the Sayyads declined rapidly after the murder of Mubarak Shah. The conspirators, led by Sarwarul Mulk, raised Muhammad Shah, a nephew of the deceased sultan, on the throne, *albeit* the real power of the state was usurped by Sarwarul Mulk, the *wazir*. The latter's attempt to liquidate his rivals compelled many loyal nobles to take up arms against the king-maker and plunged the already weakened sultanate into total confusion and anarchy. It encouraged the rulers of Jaunpur, Gwalior and Malwa to snatch away large slices of the territory of Delhi. The sultan got rid of the king-maker by getting him murdered with the help of other nobles; nevertheless, he failed to cope with the forces of disorder and disruption. But for the timely help given by Bahlol Lodhi, the governor of Lahore, Delhi might have fallen into the hands of an army of invasion from Malwa. The sultan conferred the title of *Khan-i-Khanan* on Bahlol Lodhi.

On the death of Muhammad Shah in 1445, his son Alauddin ascended the throne of Delhi with the highsounding title of Alam Shah; he proved to be the last and the most incompetent ruler of the Sayyad dynasty. It was about the reign of this monarch that a contemporary poet had sarcastically remarked :

"Shahnshahi Shah Alam,
Az Delhi ta Palam."

That is, 'the empire of the emperor of the world (*Shah Alam*) extended only from Delhi to Palam,' situated at a distance of about ten miles to the south of old Delhi. Unable to cope with the administrative problems, revolts, and intrigues of his courtiers, he retired to his personal estate at Badaun. It provided an opportunity

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to Bahlol Lodhi, the most prominent noble of the state, to acquire control of Delhi. He deposed 'Shah Alam' and laid the foundation of a new dynasty on the throne of Delhi but permitted the ex-sultan to retain his estate of Badaun. 'Shah Alam' was fully content with his estate and died a happy man in 1478.

The Lodhis : First Afghan Dynasty of Delhi

Bahlol Lodhi (1451-89) was the founder of the first afghan ruling house of Delhi;[21] the lodhis constituted a clan of the ghilzai tribe of the afghans. Bahlol's grandfather Behram was originally a merchant who migrated to Multan during the reign of sultan Firoze Tughluq and took up service under the provincial governor. Behram had five sons, two of whom, Malik Sultan Shah and Malik Kala, the father of Bahlol, attained some prominence. Malik Kala defeated Jasrath Khokhar and set up an independent principality for himself in the northwestern region while Malik Sultan Shah received appointment as governor of Sirhind with the title of Islam Khan in 1419 from Khizr Khan Sayyad of Delhi. Malik Kala was killed by his enemies and the orphaned Bahlol, known by the pet name of Ballu in his chidhood, was brought up with great affection and care by his uncle Islam Khan at Sirhind. Bahlol grew up to be a brilliant youth, possessed of ambition and fine qualities of martial leadership. Islam Khan gave his daughter in marriage to Bahlol, made him the commander of 12,000 and nominated him as his successor.[22] Islam Khan fell fighting the mughals in 1431 and was succeeded by Bahlol Lodhi as governor of Sirhind. By his military prowess and diplomacy, Bahlol extended his sway over the fiefs of Dipalpur, Lahore and Multan and secured recognition of his possessions from sultan Muhammad Sayyad of Delhi; the latter depended heavily upon him for the defence of his capital against his enemies. By the time Alauddin Alam Shah ascended the throne of Delhi, Bahlol had assumed the role of a popular leader of the afghan community, many of whose members held high offices and estates in northwestern India. Alam Shah could not pull on amicably with all-powerful *wazir* Hamid Khan, and having failed to control the situation in Delhi, retreated to his personal estate at Badaun. Bahlol Lodhi entered the capital at the head of a large army with the declared object of restoring law and order. After sometime, he

21. Daulat Khan, who held control of Delhi for over a year (1413-14), after the death of sultan Mahmud Tughluq, was also an afghan noble; *albeit* he never assumed the royal title; he was defeated and deposed by Khizr Khan, the founder of the sayyad dynasty. The second and the last afghan dynasty of Delhi was provided by Sher Shah Sur and his successors (1540-55).

22. Though nominally the governor of Sirhind under the sayyads of Delhi, Islam Khan consolidated his position almost as the *de facto* ruler of his fief which was passed on by him in heritage to his nephew and son-in-law Bahlol Lodhi on merit, in preference to his son Qutb Khan.

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imprisoned the *wazir* (Hamid Khan) by a stratagem and ascended the throne of Delhi on April 19, 1451, with the apparent consent of Alauddin Alam Shah Sayyad, who was content with the fief of Badaun.

The lodhi dynasty founded by Bahlol, produced three sultans who ruled over Delhi for 75 years (1451-1526). Bahlol Lodhi enjoyed a long reign of 39 years. As a shrewd politician, who well understood the turbulent character of his people, he did not assume dictatorial attitude towards his afghan colleagues and followers. Instead, he shared power with the afghan *amirs*, treated them with respect and gave them an impression that their voice counted in all important matters of the state. The royal court of Bahlol Lodhi was quite different in composition and character from that of the turkish sultans of Delhi. He did not occupy his seat on an elevated throne in the traditional style of the medieval monarchs; instead, he sat on the carpet, surrounded by his prominent nobles, and behaved 'in such a way as to show that he had been elected by his own people' and that he held the royal powers 'at their pleasure'.[23] The sultan was accorded the status of *primus, inter pares* among the afghan nobles; the afghan monarchy of Delhi was, therefore, in reality, a feudalistic tribal oligarchy."[24] Bahlol Lodhi distributed all the important civil and military offices among his trusted afghan *amirs*. He parcelled out his dominions into small *jagirs* and estates and handed them over to his kinsmen and other afghan *amirs*. These nobles enjoyed autonomy in the administration of their assignments and recruited their own feudal armies, the collective strength of which far exceeded the might of the royal army stationed in Delhi. All the afghan immigrants from their homeland were received with an open arm and extended patronage by the state through grants of land and government service. Bahlol Lodhi thus attempted to 'afghanise' the administration as far as possible.[25] He met with oppositions from the turkish and other non-afghan elements which was suppressed with an iron hand.

Bahlol Lodhi established law and order within his small tribal kingdom with the active cooperation and support of his afghan nobles. He brought Ahmad Ali Khan of Mewat into subjugation and annexed seven of his *parganas* to Delhi. He led successful expeditions against Dariya Khan of Sambhal, Isa Khan of Koli (Aligarh), Mubarak Khan of Sakit, *raja* Pratap Singh of Kampila and Patiali, and Qutb Khan of Rapri, all of whom were permitted to retain their possessions as the feudatory chieftains. He suppressed revolts in Multan and Sirhind and also brought the refractory *zamindars* of the Doab under his effective control.

23. Yusuf Hussain, *Indo-Muslim Polity*; *op. cit.*, p. 174.
24. *ibid.*
25. K. S. Lal, *Twilight of the Sultanate*; *op. cit.*, p. 134.

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Bhalol Lodhi realised his limitations as a regional ruler of the country and refrained from adopting an aggressive attitude towards the powerful neighbouring chief. Nevertheless, he had to wage a long drawn-out war against sultan Mahmud Shah of the Sharqi dynasty of Jaunpur, who disputed his claim to the throne of Delhi. It was because Mahmud Shah was the son-in-law of Alauddin Alam Shah Sayyad, the ex-sultan of Delhi, and his sayyad wife instigated him to avenge the deposition of her father. After Mahmud Shah's death, his successor Husain Shah also continued the struggle against Bahlol Lodhi for many years. Jaunpur was, ultimately, conquered by Bahlol but the latter did not annex it to Delhi; instead, he placed his eldest son Barbak Shah on the throne of Jaunpur and retained the separate identity of the kingdom in close association with Delhi, thus creating a fraternity of the two afghan kingdoms. The success of Bahlol's enterprise against Jaunpur frightened the chieftains of Dholpur, Kalpi, Bari and Alipur to acknowledge the suzerainty of Delhi. Bahlol led a successful military expedition against Gwalior and received a tribute of 80 *lakh tankas* from its ruler Man Singh. While returning from Gwalior, he was taken ill and expired *en route* to Delhi in July 1489. He was known as a just monarch who ruled over his subjects with moderation.

Sikander Lodhi (1489-1517): One of Bahlol's nine sons—Nizam Khan, was elected by the afghan nobles as the sultan of Delhi; he ascended the throne on July 17, 1489 with the title of Sikander Shah. A tall and handsome man of 31, he was the son of a hindu goldsmith's daughter—a disability which provoked opposition to his claim to royalty by a strong lobby in the court; a number of his brothers, nephews and other kinsmen held big fiefs who posed a potential danger to his throne. Sikander Lodhi handled the situation tactfully and with courage; he pacified most of them, suppressed some and, through the display of religious bigotry towards his hindu subjects, established his reputation as a staunch muslim ruler 'in no way inferior to a pure afghan'. Even otherwise, he was the most capable, efficient and powerful of all the three lodhi sultans of Delhi. He shifted his capital in 1504 to the village of Agra on the bank of the Jumna, which was developed into a beautiful town during his period of rule. Sikander Lodhi imparted a bit of the royal glory to the court, occupied his seat on an elevated throne and did not allow the old *grandees* of the kingdom to claim equality with him. His elder brother sultan Barbak Shah of Jaunpur preferred his claim to the sultanate; he was defeated by Sikander Lodhi at Kanauj, then pardoned and given back his kingdom in subordination to Agra. Barbak Shah proved, however, an incompetent ruler who failed to keep the disaffected nobles of his court under his firm control; he was, therefore, deprived of his possessions after sometime, and Jaunpur was annexed to Agra. A court party hatched a conspiracy to dethrone Sikander Lodhi and install his younger brother Fateh Khan on the throne. To his good fortune, Sikander Lodhi got

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wind of it and took stern action against them; twenty-two afghan officers were dismissed and severely punished. It enhanced the reputation of Sikander Lodhi and established his firm hold on the throne.

Sikander Lodhi attempted to revive the concept of absolute monarchy by bringing the afghan nobles under the effective control of the central authority. He set up an efficient espionage system to keep himself abreast of all the developments within his dominions and watch the activities of the disaffected officers. He enforced discipline among the services and improved the machinery of law and order; like Firoze Tughluq, he introduced Islamic law as a matter of state policy.

Sikander Lodhi was a capable military general; he pursued a policy of aggressive intervention into the affairs of the neighbouring states and extended his dominions by the conquest of south Bihar in 1494-95. He pushed the frontiers of his kingdom to the borders of Bengal and concluded a treaty of friendship with its ruler Alauddin Husain Shah. He subjugated the hindu chiefs of Dholpur, Narwar and Chanderi *albeit* his military campaigns against Gwalior and Malwa were not successful. He died of illness on November 21, 1517.

Ibrahim Lodhi (1517-26): The afghan monarchy was weakened by the fissiparous and individualistic tendencies of its otherwise brave and freedom loving *grandees*; they were ever eager to reassert their influence in the state affairs. Therefore, on the death of Sikander Lodhi, they decided to parcel out his territorial possessions into two kingdoms, to be headed by the first two of his five sons; the eldest prince Ibrahim Khan was to inherit the kingdom of Delhi and Agra while his younger brother Jalal Khan was to rule the eastern and southern part of the sultanate from Kalpi to Jaunpur. Accordingly, Ibrahim, styled as Ibrahim Shah, was coronated at Delhi and Jalal Khan, accompanied by his followers and the army, left for Jaunpur. Soon afterwards, some prominent nobles realised the folly of their decision which stood to weaken the afghan hegemony in northern India, and recognised Ibrahim Lodhi as the sole monarch of the entire afghan kingdom; *albeit* the mischief had been done and Jalal Khan, though not successful in acquiring control of Jaunpur, crowned himself as sultan with the title of Jalaluddin at Kalpi, of which he had been the governor during the reign of his father. It led to a civil war between the two brothers in which Jalal Khan was defeated. He fled from Kalpi but fell into the hands of Gonds who passed him on to Delhi. He was sent as a captive to Hansi but murdered on the way by the secret orders of sultan Ibrahim.

Man Singh, the ruler of Gwalior, had offered asylum to the fugitive Jalal Khan for a shortwhile; Ibrahim Lodhi used it as a pretext to send a royal army, comprising 30,000 horses and 300

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elephants, for the conquest of Gwalior. It laid seige to the fort which dragged on for many months, necessitating the despatch of reinforcements from Delhi. Man Singh died during the course of the struggle and his son and successor Vikramajit was hardpressed to acknowledge the suzerainty of Delhi. It was a great victory for Ibrahim Lodhi which made him overconfident of his military prowess. He committed the blunder of challenging rana Sangram Singh of Mewar and sent a huge army for the conquest of Chittor. To his great horror and dismay, the army of Delhi was routed and annihilated by the valiant rajputs. This gave a serious setback to the power and prestige of the young sultan and signalled revolts in various parts of his kingdom. His initial enthusiasm for military conquests being over, Ibrahim Lodhi, an inexperienced and incompetent ruler that he was, became nervous and did not know how to restore law and order. He adopted a dictatorial attitude towards the old and experienced afghan officers, and annoyed his ministers and provincial governors by the display of irritable temper and arrogance. The latter looked upon the sultan as their leader—*primus inter pares*, and not as a master; therefore they resented the autocratic behaviour of Ibrahim Lodhi and did not cooperate with him whole heartedly in the solution of administrative and political problems. The sultan lacked the power as well as the wisdom to deal with the refractoryfeudal lords. As a result, some hereditary provinicial governors set themselves up as *de facto* rulers of their possessions and instigated others to do likewise. The revengeful and cruel treatment meted out by the sultan to the disaffected nobles, who fell into his hands, terrified the rest to carry on the struggle to the bitter end. Azam Humayun Sarwani, an old noble of Sikander Lodhi who had collaborated with Jalal Khan, submitted and received royal favours. After sometime, he was imprisoned and liquidated by Ibrahim Lodhi in spite of the fact that he had apprised the sultan of the rebellious designs of his own son Islam Khan, who died fighting the royal armies. Mian Bhua, the aged *wazir* of Sikander Lodhi's times, was dismissed for expressing his views which were disagreeable to the sultan; he died in the royal prison. Mian Husain Khan Farmuli had once defied the sultan but was pardoned and given the governorship of Chanderi. His uncallled for assassination, in his sleep, by the alleged agents of the sultan, convinced the old *grandees* of the sultanate about the 'perfidious designs' of Ibrahim Lodhi and they took up arms against him in self-defence. Khan-i-Jahan Lodhi and Dariya Khan Lohani, governor of Bihar, were their ring-leaders. Nasir Khan Lohani, the governor of Ghazipur, was ordered by the sultan to march against Dariya Khan but he changed sides and himself raised the standard of revolt. After the death of Dariya Khan Lohani, his son Bahadur Khan declared himself the sultan of Bihar with the title of Muhammad Shah and struck coins in his name. The other rebels immediately flocked to his court and the ranks of his armed forces swelled to over one

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lakh. Ibrahim Lodhi could do pretty little against the rebels and the eastern half of the kingdom, including the erstwhile state of Jaunpur, was cut off from Delhi.

Though deprived of a major part of his dominions, Ibrahim Lodhi might have survived as the ruler of Delhi *albeit* the rebellious attitude of the afghan nobles of the Punjab and the new political developments in the northwest region ruined him. Administration of the Punjab had been entrusted to their kinsmen by the lodhi sultans; Tatar Khan, the governor of Lahore, was a cousin of sultan Bahlol Lodhi. Tatar Khan's son Daulat Khan Lodhi, the hereditary governor of Lahore, was a seasoned soldier who possessed 80,000 strong army and a huge purse. Sultan Ibrahim Lodhi felt annoyed with him owing to the fact that he had failed to present himself at the court at the time of the former's coronation, apparently because of his advanced age. Ill-treatment of Daulat Khan's son Dilawar Khan by the sultan alarmed the crafty governor of Lahore to make arrangements for his self-defence. Alam Khan Lodhi, governor of Dipalpur and a maternal uncle of Ibrahim Lodhi, preferred his claim to the throne of Delhi; he had his supporters among the disaffected courtiers of the capital. The Punjab was thus in open revolt against Ibrahim Lodhi when Babar appeared on the scene. The illustrious descendant of Amir Timur and Chengiz Khan, he lost his foothold in his ancestral land of central Asia but conquered Kabul in 1504 by a stratagem and established himself as the king of Afghanistan. He directed his attention towards the conquest of India in 1519-20 and led five military expeditions into the Punjab in quick succession. Caught between the two whirlwinds, Ibrahim Lodhi from Delhi and Babar from Kabul, the self-seeking afghan nobles of the Punjab attempted to save their skins from each; it led to what is called the triple contest for political supremacy in the Punjab. Babar came out victorious in the struggle in the long run; he acquired control of the Punjab (1524-25) by crushing the power of its afghan nobles, killed Ibrahim Lodhi at the historic (first) battle of Panipat on April 21, 1526, and laid the foundation of the mughal dynasty in India. The sultanate of Delhi came to an end with the fall of Ibrahim Lodhi.

Causes of Downfall of the Sultanate

The disintegration of the sultanate of Delhi lay in the logic of history; the most distressing part of the story, however, is that its ghost continued to haunt the historic capital of India for so long after the death of Firoze Tughluq and the invasion of Amir Timur.

The sultanate reached the maximum dimension and the zenith of its glory during the early part of Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign. Its growth and development stopped in the early thirties of the fourteenth century. The first crack in its solidarity appeared in 1335-36 when the sultan failed to suppress the revolt of his

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governor in Malabar which led to the birth of the first break-away muslim state in the far south. It signalled the outbreak of revolts in various parts of the vast turkish empire. The objectives of most of the leaders of rebellions, faced by Muhammad bin Tughluq after 1335, were to carve out independent states and secede from the imperial government of India. A major part of the southern peninsula was cut off from Delhi and the rest of the sultanate was in ferment when Muhammad bin Tughluq breathed his last. Firoze Tughluq failed to stem the rot that had set in and, with his death in 1388, the sultanate ceased to exist except in name. Muhammad bin Tughluq and Firoze Tughluq were responsible to a considerable extent for the ultimate decline and disintegration of the sultanate; *albeit* they were not the only villains of the peace in this affair. A number of defects and shortcomings were inherent in the system itself which were bound to weaken and destabilise the sultanate sooner or later. Most of these factors have already found mention in the narrative, particularly, with reference to the overthrow of the reigning monarchs and the frequent change of dynasties. These may briefly be recapitulated.

There was no fixed law or popularly recognised convention regarding succession to the throne among the sultans of Delhi. Assumption of the crown depended on the general law of nature—'the survival of the fittest'. It was a major factor which facilitated the rapid spread of the turkish dominance in India; nevertheless, the excessive application of this principle weakened the monarchy in the long run. The wearing of the crown became a great hazard even for the best and the most capable of the princes. The whole age of the sultanate was characterised by the frequent change of rulers and the ruling dynasties. The sultans, on the whole, comprised a race of cut-throats; the princes and ambitious nobles killed their near and dear ones and liquidated the entire families of their parents, friends and patrons for the attainment of the throne. Such wanton destruction of life and wiping off royal talent at the hands of unscrupulous and unworthy assassins and blood-thirsty generals cut at the roots of the turko-afghan monarchy by depriving it of the very human source from which it sprang up. The self-seeking nobles belonging to diverse races and clans, the slave officers attached to various sultans, and the princely products of the royal *harem*, which usually comprised hundreds of women were all involved in this self-destructive game of power-politics.

The strength and stability of the sultanate was based on its army organisation. The fearless and courageous turkish warriors had conquered India by force of arms; it were they who constituted the backbone of the sultanate. The army establishment of the sultans was, however, based on feudal principles, in general, which carried with it all the inherent defects of the system. Alauddin raised a strong and well-equipped standing army, paid in cash by the state, but his successors, including the tughluqs, failed to

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follow his example in this regard. The offensive power of the royal army was lost during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq while its defensive teeth were broken by Firoze Tughluq by the callous disregard of the most elementary principles of the army organisation. He made the system of granting *jagirs* to the nobles and assignments on revenue to the troopers universal, offered military service to the old and incompetent persons for life, and adopted many ill-conceived and unprofessional measures which seriously undermined the discipline and efficiency of the royal army. Firoze Tughluq was primarily responsible for the decay and deterioration of the once mighty and invincible army of the sultanate; none of the succeeding sultans of Delhi possessed the intellect or resources to revive the martial traditions of the bygone days.

The turkish sultans of Delhi were autocrats; their government was based on highly centralised despotic principles. Some of the sultans formally introduced the Islamic Law within their dominions, *albeit* there was no *rule of law* in the sultanate, most of the time; it was usually the word of the sultan which was treated as law. The strength or success of the government, therefore, depended upon the personality and character of the sultan. The successors of Firoze Tughluq were all weaklings who failed to acquire a strong grip over the administration and played as tools in the hands of their selfish nobles. The sultanate was, accordingly, reduced to a petty principality of Delhi within a decade of the death of Firoze Tughluq.

The sultanate was a police state by nature; it was based on force and aggression, and did not enjoy the consent or willing co-operation of its subjects. The sultans were usually contended with the performance of a two-fold function—the maintenance of peace and order and the collection of taxes. Public welfare activities were not treated as a duty of the state though some benevolent sultans did a lot for the happiness and prosperity of their people and helped in the socio-cultural development of the country. The sultanate was formally recognised as an *Islamic state*; therefore, majority of its subjects who happened to be non-muslims, suffered from civil disabilities. With a few exceptions, most of the sultans did not attempt to win the goodwill of their hindu subjects. As a result, the hindus generally maintained an attitude of indifference towards the government and did not take much interest in the rise and fall of the ruling dynasties or change in the fortunes of the reigning monarchs. Whenever possible, the vanquished hindu chiefs took up arms against the sultanate and strove their best to regain their lost independence. The sultanate was, therefore, not based on popular support.

Muhammad bin Tughluq was the first among the sultans of Delhi who owes a special responsibility for the decline and dismemberment of the sultanate. Partly an idealist and partly a

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visionary, he was a self-willed, obstinate and hot-tempered autocrat who mishandled the affairs of the state and created a thoroughmess on the political, administrative, economic as well as military fronts. He wasted the immense resources of the state on his wild projects which failed because these were either executed badly or found impracticable. He earned the hostility of the nobility and the *ulema* and was hated and despised by his subjects. He failed to suppress the forces of disruption and badly impaired the military prowess of the sultanate before his death.

Of course, there is some force in the argument that the vastness of the empire, reached during the first decade of Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign, carried the seeds of its own decay. In those days when the means of communication and transport were poorly developed, it must have been an uphill task for the imperial government to exercise effective control over the distant provinces. It encouraged the governors of far-flung provinces to amass the resources in men and material and set themselves up as independent rulers whenever the sultan was in trouble or the imperial government was caught napping.

Firoze Tughluq inherited a fast disintegrating empire, infested with widespread revolts and disorders. An incompetent general, he had neither the resources nor the will-power to bring back the lost dominions under his control; he was, therefore, content with the sultanate which had been reduced to the status of a regional kingdom. It was governed well during the first half of his reign by his capable prime minister Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul, after whose death the administration deteriorated rapidly under the unimaginative and weak policy of the sultan. Revival of the *jagir* system, conversion of the nobility into feudal lords, dominance of the *ulema* in the state politics, defective revenue policy, unscientific land reforms and recognition of the hereditary principle in the services rendered the administration hollow from within, crippling it beyond all repairs. Weak central government, corrupt civil services and the defunct military organisation encouraged the provincial governors and feudal nobles to defy the governmental authority and signal the total disruption of the sultanate. Above all, the excessively long life enjoyed by Firoze Tughluq did an incalculable harm to the interest of his own ruling dynasty. His first two grown-up and capable sons predeceased him, thus leaving the burden of the state upon the shoulders of his younger offsprings, none of whom was experienced or trained enough to hold his own as a monarch. It led to the rise of king-makers among the selfish-nobles who used the princes as puppets in their own hands, engulfed Delhi into a protracted civil war, and made a mockery of the crown. No wonder, the sultanate of Delhi collapsed like a house of cards immediately after the death of Firoze Tughluq.

The sultanate of Delhi was dead before the invasion of Timur; the ghost of it remained. The mighty conqueror struck a blow at

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the ghost and made it shriek with pain. He trampled Delhi under his feet and proclaimed the death of the sultanate to the whole of the muslim world. It was all set for the establishment of a Timurid empire in India *albeit* the hero of the hour was least attracted by it; he left for Samarqand and never bothered to know who ruled over the dead and the dying.

Amir Timur left behind a political vaccum at Delhi, once the imperial capital of the Indo-Turkish sultans; it is amazing, however, that not a single leader emerged on the Indian political horizon for over a century and a quarter who could revive the past glory of Delhi and establish his claim as the monarch of India. Stripped off its grandeur and prestige, Delhi was reduced to the status of a petty principality which continued to be ruled by *lilliputians* styled as sultan. It showed some signs of recovery under the lodhis *albeit* the tribal monarchy of the afghans, based on feudal principles and weakened by the fissiparous and individualistic tendencies of its *grandees*, stood little chance of developing into an all India power. Babar sounded its death-knell on the historic battle-field of Panipat and revived the glory of Delhi as the imperial capital of *Hindustan.*

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9

Northern India in the Fifteenth Century

General Characteristics of the Period

The sultanate of Delhi was transformed into a mighty Indian empire by the slow but steady conquest of numerous regional kingdoms and feudal estates during the period of a century and a quarter from 1206 to 1335. In the course of its rapid disintegration from 1335 to 1400, it gave birth to an equally larger number of regional and provincial states and feudal principalities besides the two mighty kingodms of Bahmani and Vijayanagar in south India. The regional and provincial states comprised, among others, the well-established and prosperous muslim states of Malwa, Gujarat, Jaunpur and Bengal, and powerful rajput states of Mewar and Marwar in Rajputana. In between them were interspersed numerous small monarchies, semi-independent feudatory chieftainships and petty estates of the hereditary landlords. The big states were usually in perpetual warfare with their rivals while the small ones suffered under and wavered in their feudal loyalties towards the powerful neighbours. The country thus presented a dismal picture from the political angle in the fifteenth century. The sultanate as a binding force between the distant provinces had ceased to exist and political disintegration of the country was complete.

A few special characteristics of the fifteenth century India are, however, noteworthy. Most of the regional and provincial states were ruled by the muslim monarchs. The sultanate as 'an Islamic state' had declined but not so the political dominance of the muslims in the subcontinent. Their political power was decentralised and shifted to the headquarters of the erstwhile *iqtas* or provinces of the sultanate; almost all the major provinces gave rise to powerful muslim states. Islam was firmly rooted in the soil of India; it had become one of the Indian creeds. The muslims constituted a part and parcel of the Indian society. Islamic culture was gradually intermingling with the hindu culture and had become acceptable to the Indian society in general. Muslim monarchs and the ruling elite were mostly Indian in blood, thought and attitude; very few of them traced their foreign pedigree or claimed dominant position

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in the society on that account. They were Indian muslims in every respect.

Many of the regional and provincial rulers of the fifteenth century, whether hindus or muslims, were enlightened and benevolent monarchs who worked for the welfare and happiness of their people and enjoyed their goodwill in abundant measure. They patronised scholars and artists and helped in the socio-cultural, moral and material advancement of the society. The *bhakti* reformers and *sufi* saints stood for the socio-religious reforms and helped in bringing about a synthesis between the hindu and Islamic cultures. The socio-cultural development of early medieval India is much more fascinating than the political history of the times and has been reserved for detailed treatment in a separate volume of the present study.

Bengal

It became a stronghold of muslim power towards the close of the twelfth century when it was conquered by Ikhtiyaruddin Muhammad-bin-Bakhtiyar Khalji, a brilliant lieutenant of Muhammad Ghori. The enterprising khalji chief and his associates, who became Bengalis by domicile, provided the nucleus of ruling elite of the province for a long time to come. Bengal formally constituted a part of the sultanate of Delhi from its very inception *albeit* its governor enjoyed considerable autonomy, including powers of war and peace with their neighbours. They recruited their own armies and maintained a separate purse over which Delhi had no effective control. Being situated far away from the capital, its governors occasionally behaved as *de facto* rulers and defied the authority of the centre whenever they found the opportunity to do so.

Ghiasuddin Bahadur, governor of Bengal, revolted against Muhammad bin Tughluq in 1330-31 but was defeated and killed by the royal troops. Thereupon, Bengal was divided into two *iqtas* with their headquarters at Sonargaon (Dacca) and Lakhnauti respectively. In 1338-39, the Bengali muslim elite rovolted against Delhi once again and the sultan was unable to take any action to restore the imperial authority. As a result, two independent muslim states came into existence in Bengal; Sonargaon was ruled by Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah while Lakhnauti passed under the control of Haji Ilyas. After a brief struggle against his Bengali counterpart, Haji Ilyas acquired control over Sonargaon also and became the sovereign ruler of united Bengal with the title of Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah.

Firoze Tughluq made two abortive attempts to bring Bengal back into the fold of the sultanate and had instead to recognise its independence. Ilyas died in 1357 and was succeeded by his son

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Sikander Shah (1357-93) who consolidated his possessions into a well-knit and flourishing state.

The ruling house of Ilyas was transplanted by one Jadu, a hindu convert, entitled Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah in 1411; he and his successors ruled over Bengal for about three decades. Nasiruddin, a grandson of Haji Ilyas, revived the fortunes of the old ruling house by acquiring the crown for himself in 1443. The fifth and the last descendant of his family was murdered by an Abyssinian slave officer Barbak Shah in 1486 and the state was engulfed in political anarchy. Ultimately a Bengal noble Alaud-din Hussain Shah restored law and order in the state and laid the foundation of a new ruling dynasty in 1493 which came to be known as the Hussain dynasty. Sikander Lodhi, after making an unsuccessful bid to conquer Bengal, was obliged to conclude a treaty of friendship with Hussain Shah on equal footing. The latter's son and successor Nusrat Shah (1518-33) was known to Babar as a capable and powerful monarch of Bengal. Nusrat Shah was succeeded by his son Alauddin Firoze Shah as the ruler of Bengal but the young prince was put to death by his uncle who usurped the throne with the title of Sultan Ghiasuddin Mahmud Shah. He was defeated and turned out of Bengal by Sher Khan (later Sher Shah Sur) in 1537 and died a fugitive in the army camp of Humayun.

Jaunpur

Firoze Tughluq founded the town of Jaunpur* on the bank of the Gomti during his return march from the second Bengal expedition in 1359-60 in the memory of his cousin Jauna Khan (Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq). In 1494, Sultan Mahmud Tughluq sent Malik Sarwar Khwaja Jehan (an eunuch) to Jaunpur to administer the territories 'from Kanauj to Bihar, with the title of Sultan ush Sharq—'Lord of the East'. After the sack of Delhi by Amir Timur, Malik Sarwar set up as the *de facto* ruler of Jaunpur; however, he did not assume a royal title. On his death in 1399, his adopted son assumed the title of Sultan Mubarak Shah and laid the foundation of what is known as the Sharqi dynasty of Jaunpur. He died in 1402 and was succeeded by his younger brother Ibrahim Shah (1402-36), the greatest ruler of the dynasty. A capable administrator and scholar, Ibrahim Shah gave a long era of peace and prosperity to his people. He was a patron of art, architecture, education and learning. He beautified his capital by the construction of magnificent public buildings, gardens and educational institutions, as a result of which the town became a

* Ancient rajput stronghold Manaich; conquered by Zafar Khan, the third son of Sultan Ghiasuddin Tughluq; Zafar Khan received the town as a personal estate from the sultan and renamed it Zafarabad. Firoze Tughluq constructed a new township in its neighbourhood, to be used as a royal post in the east.

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great centre of Islamic culture and learning, and earned the title of 'Shiraz of India.'

Ibrahim Shah was succeeded on the throne of Jaunpur by his son Mahmud Shah (1436-57) who married a daughter of Sultan Alauddin Alam Shah Sayyad of Delhi. He was shocked to know of the deposition of his father-in-law in 1451. On the other hand, Bahlol Lodhi, who had usurped the throne of Delhi, was equally anxious to bring Jaunpur back into the fold of the sultanate once again. It led to the outbreak of a long and protracted struggle between Delhi and Jaunpur for political supremacy. On the death of Mahmud Shah, his eldest son Muhammad Shah became the sultan of Jaunpur; he was, however, assassinated by a rival court party which installed his younger brother Hussain Shah (1458-1500) on the throne. He invaded Delhi but was repulsed by Bahlol Lodhi; the two parties entered into a truce which lasted only four years and war broke out between them once again. In the long run, Jaunpur was conquered by the Lodhi sultan and Hussain Shah fled to south Bihar; he died a fugitive in 1500 and with his death the sharqi dynasty came to an end. As narrated in the previous chapter, Bahlol Lodhi placed his eldest son Barbak Khan on the throne of Jaunpur and retained the separate identity of the kingdom in subordinate association with Delhi.

Malwa

It was conquered and annexed to Delhi by Alauddin Khalji in 1305; it remained a part of the sultanate upto 1398 when its governor Dilawar Khan Ghori set up as *de facto* ruler without assuming a royal title. His son Hushang Shah (1406-35) adopted all the insignia of royalty. He was a great warrior who fought many battles against his neighbouring chiefs. His son and successor Muhammad Shah Ghori was deposed by his crafty *wazir* Mahmud Khan Khalji in May 1436; the latter assumed the title of *shah* and laid the foundation of the khalji dynasty of Malwa. Mahmud Shah extended the boundaries of his kingdom during his long reign of 33 years (1436-69). The fourth ruler of the khalji dynasty, Mahmud II, was an inefficient and incapable ruler. A famous rajput chief, Medni Rao of Chanderi, exercised great influence in the internal politics of Malwa and for sometime acted even as the prime minister of the state. Malwa was, however, torn by mutual dissensions and revolts of the muslim nobles. To his misfortune, Mahmud II entered into a deadly conflict with the sisodia rajputs of Mewar also and suffered defeats at the hands of Rana Sangram Singh. Malwa was conquered by Sultan Bahadur Shah of Gujarat in 1531; it was overrun by Humayun in 1535-36 and annexed to the mughal empire of Delhi.

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Gujarat

The province of Gujarat was conquered by Alauddin Khalji in 1297. Its governors and the local ruling elite made many an abortive attempt to liberate themselves from the yoke of Delhi during the reigns of Muhammad bin Tughluq and Firoze Tughluq. After the invasion of Amir Timur, Gujarat became virtually independent of Delhi under its governor Zafar Khan, son of a hindu convert; he assumed the title of Sultan Muzafar Shah in 1401 and ruled for another decade (1401-11). He was succeeded by his grandson Ahmad Shah (1411-42) who proved a very capable and successful ruler. He established his headquarters at a new township, named after him as Ahmedabad. The sixth ruler of the dynasty Mahmud Shah *alias* Baghera (1458-1511) was the greatest and the most powerful ruler of Gujarat. The Portuguese built a factory at Diu during his reign. He was succeeded by Muzafar Shah II who was hardpressed to preserve the independence of his state against encroachments by the rulers of Malwa and Mewar. On his death in July 1526, his son Bahadur Shah became the sultan. He extended the boundaries of his dominions by the conquest of Malwa in 1531. He was turned out of Malwa and Gujarat in 1535-36 by Humayun but, taking advantage of the negligence and incompetence of the latter, he recovered Gujarat from the hands of the mughals. Bahadur Shah fought many battles with the mughals, and, in collaboration with Sher Khan (later Sher Shah Sur) of south Bihar, put Humayun to great inconvenience. He fell a victim to the treachery of the Portuguese who drowned him in the sea in February 1537. His successors, though weak and incapable, continued to rule over Gujarat till its conquest by Akbar in 1572.

Rajputana

The credit for the conquest of Rajputana goes to Alauddin Khalji. The fall of Ranthambhor (1299-1300) and Chittor (1303) compelled the other rajput chiefs of the region to acknowledge the suzerainty of Delhi; *albeit* the rajputs did not reconcile themselves to the loss of independence within their own homeland, and started a counter-offensive against the victors. Within two years after Alauddin's death, Chittor was liberated by the sisodia rajputs from the turkish rule. It signalled a general uprising in the region against the sultanate which resulted in the emergence of many new rajput principalities; Mewar and Marwar were the most prominent among them.

Mewar

With its capital at Chittor, Mewar re-emerged as a sovereign kingdom under Rana Hamir, a worthy son of the illustrious Rana Rattan Singh. During his long reign of 46 years (1318-64), Hamir revived the glory of ancient Mewar by his brilliant victories and administrative achievements. His son and successor Kshetra Singh

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(1364-82) was also a capable ruler; he lost his life in a family feud. One of his successors, Rana Kumbha (1433-68) was a great warrior who waged successful wars against the neighbouring rajput states as well as the sultans of Malwa and Gujarat. He transformed Mewar into a premier state of central India. He built the famous *Kirtistambha* or *Vijaystambha*—'The Tower of Victory' of Chittor in 1448 in commemoration of his victory against Malwa. He beautified Chittor by the construction of public buildings, parks and socio-cultural institutions. Rana Kumbha was a great scholar and patron of education and learning.

Towards the close of the fifteenth century, Rayamalla (1473-1509) was the ruler of Mewar whose illustrious son Rana Sangram Singh *alias* Rana Sanga (1509-28) was a contemporary of Babar. Born in 1482, Sanga was selected by the rajput nobles of Chittor to be their king in preference to his brother Jai Singh because of his virtuous character and martial qualities of leadership. He proved himself worthy of the confidence reposed in him by his nobles. His life was full of struggle and strife against the neighbouring rajput as well as muslim states. He wore eighty scars of wounds on his body which had shed each one of its legs, eyes and arms in the warfare. Rana Sanga rose to be the greatest of all the warriors of the country during his times. He inflicted a crushing defeat on the ruler of Malwa while the sultans of Gujarat were never permitted by him to extend their sway into Malwa or Rajputana. Once the armies of Ibrahim Lodhi were also defeated by Rana Sanga before they could step on the soil of Rajputana. The greatest ambition of his life was to conquer Delhi and establish hindu rule over the whole of northern India. It was perhaps with this intention that he welcomed the Indian invasion of Babar. He suffered from an illusion that Babar would go away after loot and plunder like Amir Timur, leaving the field open for him to fill up the political vacuum in northern India. His hopes were, however, dashed to the ground when Babar, after having occupied Delhi, made up his mind to convert it into his imperial capital. Rana Sanga mustered 80,000 soldiers, 500 war elephants, seven rajput kings and 140 rajput military lords under his command and confronted Babar at Khanua on March 13, 1527. He lost the battle and retreated to Chittor; physically incapacitated, he died a broken-hearted man two years later. Babar won a victory against Rana Sanga *albeit* he did not dare to march upon the rajput citadel of Chittor.

Marwar

Marwar (mod. Jodhpur) was ruled by the rathor rajputs, the descendants of rashtrakutas. The kingdom of Marwar emerged into prominence during the reign of Rana Chunda (1394-1421). His successor Rana Jodha built a new township with a fort, named after him as Jodhpur, which became the capital of Marwar. Rana Jodha secured peace, prosperity and honour for his people during

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his long reign of 50 years (1438-88). One of his illustrious sons, Rana Bika, founded the town of Bikaner in 1464 which became the headquarters of another powerful state of Rajputana with the passage of time. The rajputs of Marwar confronted the armies of Sher Shah Sur during the reign of Rana Maldeva (1532-62).

Kashmir

The valley of Kashmir did not fall within the sphere of influence of the sultanate of Delhi. The credit for the establishment of muslim rule there goes to Shah Mirza, an inhabitant of Swat, who overthrew the ruling family of his hindu patron in 1339 and ascended the throne with the title of Shamsuddin Shah. One of his grandsons, Sikander Shah (1394-1416) *alias* the *but shikan* was the ruler of Kashmir at the time of Amir Timur's invasion of Delhi. His son Ali Shah (1416-20) was deposed by his younger brother Shah Khan in June 1420; the latter ascended the throne with the title of Zainul Abidin. He was the most enlightened and popular monarch of Kashmir who enjoyed a long reign of 49 years (1420-70) and became famous in the history of Kashmir for his policy of religious toleration and public welfare activities. He has been called 'Akbar of Kashmir'. In order to respect the religious sentiments of hindus, who consituted the majority of his subjects, he abolished jaziya, banned the slaughter of cows and extended liberal patronage to Sanskrit language and literature. Towards the close of the fifteenth century, Kashmir suffered from political anarchy due to mutual dissensions of the rival groups of the courtiers. The valley was politically cut off from the rest of the country and was not affected by the political upheavals in Delhi. It was conquered by Akbar in 1585.

Orissa

It comprised a small hindu state, situated far away from the scene of national politics of the fifteenth century; it extended from the mouth of the Ganges to that of Godavari along the sea coast. Its ruler Ananta Varman Choda Ganga (c 1076-1148) built the famous Jagannatha temple at Puri. His successors repelled the turkish invaders and safeguarded their independence against heavy odds. In 1359-60, Firoze Tughluq led an expedition into the territories of Orissa, referred to as Jajnagar by the contemporary muslim chroniclers, and received tribute from its ruler. He desecrated the historic temple of lord Jagannatha. The only fact worth mentioning regarding this state is that for a very long time it served as a wedge between the muslim states of Bengal and the Deccan, and exercised a check on the penetration of muslim influence into the south from the side of Bengal. Towards the close of the fifteenth century, Orissa was ruled by Prataparudra Deva (1497-1540) who was compelled to surrender a part of his territories, situated to the south of the Godavari, to the monarch of Vijayanagar.

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10

Bahmani and Vijayanagar Kingdoms

The decline of the sultanate of Delhi as an all-India power, which started during the later part of the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq (1325-51) gave birth to two mighty states in south India—the Bahmani kingdom of Gulbarga and the empire of Vijayanagar. They came into existence almost simultaneously. The ruling dynasty of the Bahmani kingdom was provided by the muslim ruling elite of the erstwhile sultanate of Delhi while the monarchs of Vijayanagar were hindus of the indigenous stock. Together they determined the destinies of south India for over two centuries and provided a long era of peace and prosperity to their subjects when the inhabitants of Delhi had been suffering under the misrule of their lilliputian sultans. The age of the Bahmani and Vijayanagar kingdoms, therefore, constitutes a distinct epoch in the socio-cultural history of the southern half of the country from the decline of the sultanate to the rise of the mughal empire as an all-India power, and, no doubt, it deserves a special treatment.

1. The Bahmani Kingdom

The year 1335 marks the beginning of countrywide disorders and general upsurge against the unpopular rule of Muhammad bin Tughluq. The *Amiran i Sadah*—'the centurians' or the foreign nobles in the imperial service of Delhi, were in the forefront to take up arms against the sultan in Daulatabad. They acquired control of the provincial capital and set up one of their colleagues, Ismail Makh, as their sultan. Muhammad bin Tughluq was unable to suppress the revolt. Due to his old age, however, Ismail voluntarily resigned in favour of a more enterprising noble Hasan, who had meanwhile conquered Gulbarga by defeating the imperial supporters. He ascended the throne at Gulbarga with the title of Sultan Abul Muzafar Alauddin Bahman Shah on August 3, 1347. The ruling

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house founded by him came to be known as the Bahmani dynasty.[1] The Bahmani kingdom stretched roughly from Berar in the north to the Krishna river in the south and constituted the nucleus of the muslim power in the Deccan. It produced eighteen sultans whose rule lasted 180 years from 1347 to 1527; some of them were capable rulers.[2]

Hasan ruled for about a decade (1347-58). He carved out a fairly large kingdom by continuous warfare; his outstanding conquests included Bidar, Goa, Dabhol, Kolhapur and a part of Telengana. He divided his kingdom into four provinces, called *tarafs*, with their headquarters at Gulbarga, Daulatabad, Berar and Bidar; each province was entrusted to an *amir*, called *tarafdar*, who received a *jagir* in lieu of his service. The administration was based on feudal principles; the provincial governors recruited their own armies and rendered service to the centre in time of need.

Hasan's son and successor Muhammad Shah I (1358-71) laid the foundation of sound administrative system with the help of his prime minister Saifuddin Ghori. He created civil departments, each of which was held by a separate minister. Besides the prime minister, known as *wazir* or *vakil*, there were *amir i jumla*—'the finance minister', *wazir i ashraf*—'the foreign minister, and *sadr i jahan*—'head of the ecclesiastical and judicial departments'. *Nazir* acted as the deputy finance minister while a deputy minister, called *Peshwa*, was attached to the office of the prime minister. *Kotwal*, in big towns was head of the police department and responsible for the maintenance of law and order. Muhammad Shah fought with the muslim states of Malwa, Khandesh and Gujarat for territorial expansion, and entered into a deadly conflict with the hindu rulers of Warrangal, Orissa and Vijayanagar; conflict with the latter acquired a religious tinge, being styled as *jehad*—'the holy war against the infidels'. It became a common feature of the southern politics throughout the period of existence of the two rival kingdoms—Bahmani and Vijayanagar, and in the long run ruined both of them.

Mujahid Shah (1373-77), son of Mubarak Shah I, made two unsuccessful bids to encroach upon the territory of Vijayanagar. During his reign, the nobility of the kingdom came to be divided into two rival factions, the foreigners and the *Dakhinis*. The sultan extended liberal patronage to the foreign immigrants, particularly, the Persians and the Turks; they received preferential treatment in

1. He claimed descent from the Persian hero Bahman, son of Isfandiyar. Firishta says that, in his early life, Hasan was a servant of Gangu, a prominent brahman astrologer of Delhi who had predicted royalty for him; hence his title Bahman Shah had a reference to his brahman master and benefactor.
2. For details refer to Haroom Khan Sherwani, *Bahmanis of the Deccan—An Objective History*; Hyderabad (Deccan), 1953.

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services and excited the jealousy of the native muslim nobles. Like the mutual conflict of Bahmani and Vijayanagar kingdoms, the rivalry between these factions of the nobility became very acute in the years to come and proved detrimental to the interests of the state.

Muhammad Shah II (1378-97), a grandson of Hasan, was a man of peace. He entered into a friendly relationship with Vijayanagar and devoted much of his time for the welfare and prosperity of his subjects. He built mosques and *dargahs* for the muslim saints, and encouraged conversions to Islam. He opened educational institutions and patronised scholars. The sultan adopted extensive famine-relief measures to help his people during the course of a drought. It is said that he employed 5,000 bullock carts to import foodgrains from Malwa and Gujarat to meet the conditions of scarcity. His successor, Tajuddin Firoze Shah (November 1397-1422), another grandson of Hasan, was a man of sociable habits; he was fond of the company of the learned and the holy. A religious fanatic, he revived conflict with Vijayanagar and defeated the armies of Vijayanagar in two actions; in the third encounter, however, he received a crushing defeat and fled the battle-field in utter humiliation. He was deposed by his brother Ahmad Shah (1422-35). The latter led a retaliatory expedition into Vijayanagar and wreaked his vengeance upon its innocent inhabitants, 20,000 of whom were murdered in cold blood. He extracted war indemnity from the king of Vijayanagar. Ahmad Shah also fought successfully against the other neighbouring states, including those of Warrangal, Malwa and Gujarat. Ahmad Shah transferred his capital from Gulbarga to a newly-constructed town called Bidar.

The Bahmanid rulers

Humayun Shah (1457-61) was a tyrant (*zalim*) who struck terror in the hearts of his people. It is said that once he ordered his rebel brother Hasan to be thrown before a tiger in an enclosure who killed and devoured him in the presence of the sultan. Firishta says that Humayun, in a state of drunkenness, was murdered by one of his servants.

To his good fortune, Humayun had secured the services of a very capable prime minister Mahmud Gawan, entitled Khwaja-i-Jahan, who maintained perfect law and order in the state and protected it from the baneful influences of the whimsical and cruel deeds of the sultan. Mahmud Gawan was a foreign immigrant who simultaneously held the governorship of Bijapur. On the death of Humayun, the prime minister placed his minor son Nizam Shah on the throne and the dowager queen Makhdumah-i-Jahan acted as the regent of the young prince. Taking advantage of the minority of the sultan, the rulers of Orissa and Telengana invaded the Bahmani kingdom but Mahmud Gawan gallantly defended his charge. The

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sultan of Malwa also coveted the territory of the Bahmanids but was compelled to retire because of the diplomatic manoeuvres of the crafty prime minister. Nizam Shah met a sudden death in 1463 and was succeeded by his brother Muhammad Shah III (1463-82). He indulged in excessive drinking and sensual pleasures; nevertheless, the affairs of the state were not adversely affected owing to the vigilance and devoted service rendered by Mahmud Gawan. He waged wars against the neighbouring hindu states and conquered a part of the Konkan principality, Khalna, Rajamundry, Kondavir and Goa. He defeated and extracted tribute from the ruler of Vijayanagar and brought huge booty from Orissa in a surprise raid. During the reign of Mahmud Shah III, the south was engulfed in a severe famine (1474-76) which took a heavy toll of human and animal life. Mahmud Gawan utilised the resources of the state to help the famine-stricken people as far as possible.

Mahmud Gawan was an administrator *par excellence.* Though a leader of foreign nobility, he was a tactful and shrewd diplomat who secured the cooperation of most of the *grandees* of the kingdom in running the administration smoothly. He carried out extensive reforms in the field of administration and imparted freshness and vigour to the whole set up. He improved the financial resources of the state, effected land revenue reforms, strengthened the forces of law and order, streamlined the judiciary and inculcated discipline and efficiency among the services. Mahmud Gawan was a loyal and devoted servant of the state who was popular among the people and enjoyed confidence of the nobility; *albeit* some of the *Dakhinis* felt jealous of him. Once during the absence of the prime minister from the capital, they hatched a conspiracy and poisoned the ears of the sultan by showing him a forged letter of treasonable contents allegedly written by Mahmud Gawan to Narsimha, the ruler of Vijayanagar, against the interests of the Bahmani kingdom. In a fit of drunkenness, the sultan signed the death-warrants of Mahmud Gawan and by doing so sounded the death-knell of the Bahmani kingdom itself. The prime minister was put to death on April 5, 1481. His death spread a wave of consternation and resentment throughout the kingdom. The conspirators were exposed soon afterwards, and the sultan inflicted severe punishments on them. He wept and cried over his foolish action in having broken the pillar of the state, and died a grief-stricken man on March 22, 1482.

With the death of Mahmud Gawan departed the glory and fortunes of the Bahmani kingdom almost instantaneously. He was one of the greatest statesmen and administrators of early medieval India. He served three Bahmani rulers with distinction and enhanced the power and prestige of the kingdom. He was kind-hearted, generous and a man of simple habits. A great scholar and patron of education and learning, he founded a magnificent college and a library at Bidar. He spent his leisure hours in the study of books and took delight in the company of saints and scholars. He was

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however, a religious fanatic who suffered from the religious prides and prejudices of the age. The study of the achievements of the Bahmani kingdom is unintelligible without reference to the career and performance of Mahmud Gawan.

Muhammad Shah III was succeeded by his twelve years old son Mahmud Shah. In the absence of a man of integrity like Mahmud Gawan, the court was sharply divided into the traditional rival groups of the *Dakhinis* and the foreigners. Disharmony among them encouraged the provincial governors to assert their independence. Thus within a couple of years, the outlying provinces of the state were cut off from Bidar which was reduced to a petty principality. With the death of Mahmud Shah in 1518, the Bahmani kingdom virtually came to an end though three more weak and incompetent princes of the ruling house continued to be in nominal control of Bidar till 1527; they were puppets in the hands of their all-powerful ministers, Qasim 'Barinul Mamalik' and later his son Amir Ali Barid. The last prince of the Bahmani dynasty, Kalimullah, was deposed by his *wazir* Amir Ali Barid in 1527 who laid the foundation of what was called the Barid Shahi dynasty of Bidar.

The Bahmani kingdom was split up into five independent principalities. The state of Bijapur was set up by a turkish noble Yusuf Adil Shah, in 1489; the ruling house founded by him came to be called the Adil Shahi dynasty of Bijapur. Malik Ahmad, governor of Junar, declared himself independent of the Bahmani kingdom with the title of Sultan Nizam Shah in 1490. He shifted his headquarters to the newly-constructed township of Ahmadnagar and laid the foundation of the Nizam Shahi dynasty of Ahmadnagar. He conquered Daulatabad in 1499. Fateh ullah Imad Shah, governor of Berar, also asserted his independence by about 1490 and thus became the founder of the Imadshahi dynasty of Berar. Qutab Shah, governor of Telengana, set up as an independent ruler with his headquarters at Golkonda in 1512; the ruling house founded by him was known after him as the Qutbshahi dynasty. As narrated earlier, the Bahmani dynasty was itself transplanted at Bidar by Amir Ali Barid Shah, the prime minister of the state, in 1527 and the Bahmani kingdom passed out of existence.

2. The Vijayanagar Empire

The kingdom of Vijayanagar[3] came into existence almost simultaneously with that of the Bahmanids in the south. It was

3. For details refer to R. Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire* (London 1900); sec. Indian ed., National Book Trust, New Delhi, 1970; S.K. Ayyangar, *Sources of Vijayanagar History*, Madras, 1919; K.A.N. Sastri & N. Venkataramanayya, *Further Sources of Vijayanagar History*, 2 vols; Madras, 1946; & M.N. Venkata Rachamaiah, *Outline of South Indian History*, Vikas, 2nd ed; 1976 reprint.

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founded by two brothers Harihar and Bukka Rai who were probably kinsmen and revenue officials of Pratap Rudra Deva II, the Kakatiya ruler of Warrangal.[4] When the kingdom of Warrangal was overrun (1323 A.D.) by the tughluqs they shifted to Anegondi (or Kampili) and entered into the service of its local hindu chieftain. Anegondi also fell into the hands of the turkish armies after some time and the two brothers were taken captives to Delhi. They were subsequently released by Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq and allowed to return to the south as the imperial agents of Delhi. They, however, turned freedom fighters who championed the cause of liberation of the south from the turkish domination. In 1336, with the assistance and blessings of the celebrated sage Vidyaranya of Sringeri, they founded a new habitat at a strategic location, surrounded by hills and forests, on the bank of the Tungbhadra river, as a place of protection against the sudden onslaught of the turkish invaders. It was named Vijayanagar. Harihar became its first ruler, and, on his death in 1356, was succeeded by Bukka Rai who also enjoyed a long reign of 21 years (1356-77). As a matter of expediency, the two brothers did not assume the royal titles and preferred to be known as leaders of popular hindu reaction against the muslim domination of the south. During their life-time, Vijayanagar developed into a vast kingdom which extended from the Tungbhadra valley in the north to the tip of the peninsula along the eastern coast; the muslim principality of Madura, which had come into existence in 1355-56,was conquered and annexed to the Vijayanagar kingdom by Bukka Rai towards the close of his reign. The establishment of the Bahmani kingdom at Gulbarga checked the advance of Vijayanagar towards the north. As narrated earlier, the Bahmani kingdom and Vijayanagar entered into conflict with each other for political dominance of the south and their mutual rivalry ruined them in the long run. The rulers of Vijayanagar championed the cause of hinduism *albeit* they adopted liberal and tolerant attitude towards their non-hindu subjects.

The kingdom of Vijayanagar lasted 230 years and produced three ruling dynasties. The ruling house founded by Harihar and Bukka Rai came to be known as the Sangama dynasty after their father Sangama. Harihar II (1377-1404), the third ruler of the dynasty, assumed the imperial titles of *maharaja dhiraja* and *raja parmeshwara*. He consolidated his possessions into a well-administered kingdom and extended his dominions by the conquest of Kanara, Mysore, Trichinopoly and Kanchi. He waged an intermittent

4. Sewell gives seven traditional versions about the origin of the kingdom, of which the story of Harihar and Bukka Rai seems to be more plausible; the founders are said to have three more brothers. Similar doubts have been expressed about their Warrangal (Andhra) origin; some evidence is available to show that they were actually of Karnataka origin who were 'legitimate successors' to the Hoysala dynasty—Refer to Sewell, A Forgotten Empire; *op. cit.*, pp. 20-22, & M.N. Venkata Ramanappa, South Indian History, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-58.

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war with the Bahmanids for the possession of the Raichur Doab, situated between the Krishna and the Tungbhadra rivers, which formed a bone of contention between the two kingdoms. He also invaded Ceylon and obtained tribute from its ruler. The Vijayanagar kingdom exercised control over a number of seaports, the flourishing centres of maritime trade.

Devaraya II (1422-66) was one of the greatest monarchs of the Sangama dynasty who overhauled the civil and military organisation of the state and waged many successful wars against his rivals. Nicolo Conti and Abdur Razzak, the two foreign adventurers, visited the kingdom of Vijayanagar during his reign. His successors proved to be weak during whose period the powers of the state were usurped by their nobles. Virupaksha II, the last ruler of the Sangama dynasty was deposed and later assassinated by his all-powerful commander in chief Saluva Narasimha in 1485 who laid the foundation of the Saluva dynasty.

The Saluva dynasty lasted two decades only from 1485 to 1505. Narasimha (1485-90), the founder, was a capable ruler who recovered most of the territories which had been annexed by the Bahmani sultans and the hindu ruler of Orissa during the reign of the weak successors of Devaraya II. Narasimha was succeeded on the throne of Vijayanagar by his two sons in quick succession, both of whom were incompetent rulers. It provided an opportunity to Vir Narasimha, the next commander in chief of Vijayanagar to usurp the throne in 1505. He laid the foundation of what is called the Tuluva dynasty.

Vir Narasimha (1505-09) who ascended the throne by treacherously murdering the reigning monarch Immadi Narasimha, aroused resentment and opposition from many *grandees* of the state. His authority was defied by some of the provincial governors and the feudatory chiefs. The internal revolts prompted the Bahmanids and other neighbours to encroach upon the territories of Vijayanagar. Vir Narasimha had, therefore, to engage himself in endless warfare against his internal enemies and foreign invaders during his short period of rule. On his death, Vir Narasimha was succeeded by his half-brother Krishnadeva Raya (1509-29) who was by far the greatest monarch of Vijayanagar. He suppressed the internal revolts with an iron hand and restored law and order within his dominions. He humbled the pride of Gajapati Prataprudra, king of Orissa, in a number of well-contested actions; the latter was compelled to give his daughter in marriage to the victor and surrender all the territories over which Vijayanagar had ever exercised any influence or claim. Krishnadeva Raya invaded and conquered the Raichur Doab and defeated Sultan Adil Shah of Bijapur in 1520. The victorious hindu army put the Bijapur territories to loot and plunder; the historic fort of Gulbarga was sacked and demolished. This revengeful and unbecoming conduct of the Vijayanagar troops was deeply resented by the muslim rulers of the Deccan—the five successor

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states of the erstwhile Bahmani kingdom. Krishnadeva Raya had friendly relations with the Portuguese who had made their settlements along the western sea coast. Albuquerque, the Portuguese governor of Goa, sent a diplomatic-cum-trade mission to Vijayanagar in 1510 and secured many concessions from its monarch. Krishnadeva Raya was an excellent administrator, scholar and patron of art and learning; he promoted Sanskrit as well as Telugu literature. He utilised the resources of the state for the happiness and welfare of his subjects and adopted a policy of religious toleration towards them. He was loved and admired by his subjects for his noble qualities of head and heart. The territorial jurisdictions, military prowess, prestige and prosperity of Vijayanagar reached the apex of its glory during the reign of Krishnadeva Raya.

The successors of Krishnadeva Raya were weak and incompetent rulers. Sadasiva, the last ruler of the dynasty, was a puppet in the hands of his brahman prime minister Ram Raya who was an able but arrogant man. Extremely ambitious and tactless, he began to interfere in the mutual quarrels of the muslim rulers of the Deccan in the vain hope of reviving the prestige of Vijayanagar. For a while, he made them fight with one another. Ram Raya displayed religious fanaticism and vandalism during his military expeditions into the muslim dominions and thus incurred the indignation of the muslim population of the south as a whole. Accordingly. the sultans of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, Golkonda and Bidar formed a confederacy and launched a joint attack on Vijayanagar. The mighty army of Vijayanagar encountered the enemies at the battlefield of Talikota and received a crushing defeat at their hands on January 25, 1565. The whole of the army was destroyed; Ram Raya was captured and beheaded and his royal camp was sacked which yielded incalculable treasure, arms, horses and much besides. A couple of days later, the victorious armies entered the unguarded town of Vijayanagar with their minds 'full of vengeance'.[5] They sacked the town, murdered its inhabitants who fell into their hands, and demolished its magnificent buildings and temples. They stayed in the Tungbhadra valley for about six months and carried fire and sword in the countryside.

The glory of Vijayanagar came to a violent end *albeit* the kingdom itself could not be wiped out of existence altogether. Sadasiva, the puppet ruler of Vijayanagar, had not taken part in the fateful battle of Talikota ; he was deposed by Tirumala, a

5. Caesar Frederick describes the destruction of Vijayanagar at the hands of the muslim armies as follows:
"With fire and sword, with crowbars and axes, they carried the day after day their work of destruction. Never perhaps in the history of the world has such havoc been wrought and wrought suddenly, on so splendid a city and industrious population in the full plenitude of prosperity one day, and on the next seized, pillaged, and reduced to ruins, amid scenes of savage massacre and horrors. beggaring description."—quoted in V. Ramanappa, South Indian History; *op. cit.*, p. 181.

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brother of the deceased prime minister Ram Raya, who set up his headquarters at Penugonda and declared himself the king of Vijayanagar. Gradually he recovered a part of the kingdom and restored law and order there. His descendants continued to style themselves as the kings of Vijayanagar until the total disintegration of their possessions in 1614-15.

3: Impact of Bahmani Rule on the Society and Culture of the Deccan

South India, beyond the Vindhyas, constituted a repository of ancient Indian socio-cultural traditions for centuries until Alauddin Khalji appeared on the scene with his 'armies of Islam'. He disturbed the peace of the south, uprooted the indigenous social and cultural institutions and set the new forces into motion which were to shape the life and condition of the people in the times to come. The account that follows, highlights some cultural aspects of the Bahmani rule which provided a special Indo-Muslim cultural tinge to the northern belt of the southern peninsula from the Vindhyas to the banks of the Tungbhadra and the Krishna rivers.

Nature of the Bahmani Rule

The Bahmani ruling elite, including their royal dynasty, comprised a band of the foreign immigrants to India who held charge of the erstwhile imperial government and administration in the south under Muhammad bin Tughluq. They belonged to the 'colonies of muslim soldiers and generals' who had 'found lodgement in various parts of the country';[6] mostly foreign in blood and thought, they established in the Deccan a foreign rule exactly similar to the one set up by Qutubuddin Aibek and his succeeding 'slave sultans' in Delhi in the beginning of the thirteenth century. They cut off the people of the Deccan from the imperial government of Delhi which, though foreign in character, had compensated them by bringing them into the mainstream of the country's life. Therefore, the Bahmani rule implied the establishment of foreign domination by military adventurers from central Asia and it bore no comparison with the Vijayanagar empire wherein the people of the southern peninsula had regained political independence, may be on regional level, under the inspiring guidance of their indigenous ruling elite. Secondly, the Bahmanis, following in the foot-prints of the sultans of Delhi, established in the Deccan what was called 'an Islamic state' in which all the powers were concentrated in

6. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *A History of South India*, p. 8.

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the hands of the muslim nobility for a long time; some of its rulers were religious fanatics who gave preferential treatment to their muslim subjects whose number, in the beginning, was very small; they encouraged conversions to Islam by fair means or foul, and fanned the feelings of communalism among their subjects in order to retain the predominance of the muslims in all walks of life. The non-muslims were treated as *zimmis*; they had to pay *jaziya* and suffer from quite a few social and civil disabilities. The *grandees* of the kingdom rolled in wealth while the subjects were poor though contented. Nevertheless, most of the Bahmani rulers and their ministers successfully maintained peace and tranquillity in the kingdom; some of them where benevolent despots who earned the goodwill of their subjects because of their public welfare activities, On the whole, the Bahmanis were very successful rulers according to the medieval standards.

Influx of Foreigners from Muslim Countries

The Bahmani kingdom had been brought into existence by a handful of the muslim immigrant nobles and the numerical strength of muslim population among their subjects was also very small. And it were the muslims who constituted the backbone of the police state of the Bahmanis. Therefore, in order to make up the deficiency of their numbers, the Bahmanis threw open the gates of their kingdom to the foreign immigrants from the muslim countries. To quote Haroon Khan Sherwani, 'the handful of the muslims of the Deccan had to get moral and material help from over the seas, and we find an increasing influx of a vigorous human element in the shape of newcomers from the coasts round the Persian Gulf and from further north round the Caspian Sea, i.e. from Iran, Iraq and Arabia.' They comprised all sorts of men, including 'poets, litterateurs, saints, artisans, merchants, soldiers and adventurers', and came 'to settle down in the Deccan, some at the invitation of the Bahmani sultans, others of their own accord.'[7] They were called *pardesis* (foreigners) or *afaqis* (cosmopolitans). Malik Saifuddin Ghori, who was the 'righthandman of five sultans' of the Bahmani kingdom, provided many incentives from out of the royal treasury and other resources of the state to attract the best warriors and the most talented muslims from abroad. Sultan Muhammad Shah II (1378-97), 'himself a scholar of Arabic and Persian', invited 'the arab and persian poets to the Deccan to make the country the seat of learning and culture'.[8] Of course, the large-scale influx of the foreign blood, with strong exotic cultural traditions was bound to have 'a great effect upon the culture and future history of the Deccan.'[9] Haroon Khan Sherwani observes:

7. Sherwani, Bahmanis of the Deccan, *op. cit*; pp. 113-14.
8. *ibid.*, p. 114.
9. *ibid.*, p. 116.

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"It is remarkable how, while the northern cultural influences are visibly declining, foreign influences are having their direct play on the Bahmani kingdom.....it was because of these newcomers who really came to settle down in the Deccan..... An evidence of the influx of Iranians, Transoxianians and Iraqis can be found in the surnames of the civil and military personnel of the Bahmani state even in the time of Muhammad Shah I (1358-71), and Seistanis, Tabrizis, Mozendranis, Kirmanis and others of the same nature abound."[10]

Conflict Between Foreigners and the Dakhinis

The influx of foreigners was felt seriously not by the hindus or the original inhabitants of the land, who carried no weight in the state politics, but by the old muslim nobility of the Deccan, including the northern immigrants from Delhi. It were the latter who came to be called as the *dakhinis* (southerners) in comparison with the foreigners who were called *pardesis* or *afaqis*. The *dakhinis* were the real architects of the kingdom but the widescale employment of the *pardesis* in the highest civil and military offices of the state quickly reduced them to a minority within the ruling elite and bureaucracy of the Bahmani kingdom. It gave rise to rivalries between the two groups with the the result that with the beginning of the reign of sultan Mujahid Shah (1373-77), the nobility of the Bahmani kingdom came to be divided into two rival factions, the foreigners and the *dakhinis*. The latter, under force of circumstances began to identify their interests more and more with the indigenous inhabitants of the land and made a common cause with the local converts to Islam. From among the foreigners, the *dakhinis* received ready support from the African immigrants and 'the offspring of African fathers and Indian mothers' who did not see eye to eye with the immigrants from the Asian countries. It is said that the foreigners, who were more aggressive and brutal in the use of force for maintaining their hold over the country, charged the *dakhinis* with 'cowardice' and the quarrels between 'the rival factions often led to pitched battles and bloody massacres.' We are further told that 'the foreigners were generally *shias* while the Deccanis were *sunnis*, and this added acerbity to their disputes.'[11] Like the mutual conflict of Bahmani and Vijayanagar kingdoms, the rivalry between these factions of the Bahmani nobility became very active in the years to come and proved detrimental to the interests of the state.

Evolution of the Bahmani or Indo-Muslim Culture of the Deccan

Much against the heavy odds as mentioned above, the indigenous cultural forces, represented by hinduism, emerged on the

10. *ibid.*, p. 114.
11. Nilakanta Sastri, History of South India; *op. cit.*, pp. 250-51.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

surface gradually but steadily, thus initiating a process of interaction between three types of cultural influences—local, north Indian and foreign. The outcome of their interaction, which lasted about two centuries, was the birth of a peculiar Bahmani or Deccani culture. Synthesis between these diverse cultural traits started during the reign of sultan Tajuddin Firoze Shah (1397-1422) who made a conscious attempt to strike 'a balance between various elements which went to make the Bahmani state.' He also 'took the bold step of making the hindu element of population shoulder the responsibilities of government, and it was he who, for the first time, gave extensive offices to brahmans who were probably the only learned men among the hindus.'[12] Bahman Shah had adopted a liberal policy towards the hindu landlords who were allowed to retain their fiefs on the acknowledgement of suzerainty and payment of jaziya to the state. It was, however, Firoze Shah who began to offer them positions of honour and responsibility in the royal court. Rai Narsingha of Kherla was appointed 'a peer of the Bahmani kingdom' by the sultan who is also said to have received enthusiastic support from 'some Keddis of the east' in his struggle against Vijayanagar.[13] Once the gates of higher civil and military services were thrown open to the hindus, there was no going-back, and before long, they became the companions-in-arms of the *Dakhini* (muslim) nobles in their conflict with the foreigners. Almost simultaneously the inflow of the foreign elements reached its saturation point and the stage was set for synthesis between the indigenous and exotic cultural traits without prejudice against either. It radically changed the racial and religious composition and character of the Bahmani nobility and the Bahmani court which was shifted from Gulbarga to the newly-constructed township at Bidar by sultan Ahmad Shah in 1429 A.D. The Bahmani court at Bidar acquired a unique cultural personality of its own because it showed thorough intermixture of south Indian hindu and exotic muslim traits in every respect. The trade and commerce was already in the hands of the hindu bankers and businessmen. Even the overseas trade was also monopolised by the hindu traders who supplied 'horses from Urmuz, elephants from Ceylon, musk and fur from China' to the court of the Bahmani rulers. The latter had become *Dakhinis* from all points of view.

Development of Education and Learning

The Bahmani rulers were great patrons of education and learning. They invited Persian and Arabic scholars from other parts of India and abroad to come and settle down in their dominions. The state granted liberal stipends and land grants to them and offered them the highest civil and judicial offices; some of them, as for instance, Fazlullah Inju and Mahmud Gawan were the pillars of

12. Sherwani, Bahmanis of the Deccan; *op. cit.*, p. 143.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 144.

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the state who provided intellectual base to the military possessions of the foreign adventurers and transformed the Bahmani kingdom into a great set of Islamic learning and culture. Mahmud Gawan opened a magnificent library and a *madrassa* at Bidar for the promotion of Persian and Arabic studies. Muhammad al Makhzemi, an authority on Arabic language literature and migrated to the Deccan from Gujarat during the reign of sultan Ahmad Shah I (1422-36). Fazlullah Inju spent a lot of money from the state exchequer and strove his best to call Khwaja Shamsuddin Hafiz of the Deccan although his efforts bore no fruit. The successor of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Golconda extended liberal patronage to scholars of Persian and Arabic of wide fame. To mention but a few of them, Muhammad Ali Kabalai, Muhazibuddin Damammini, Sayyad Ali and Hakim Nizamuddin Gilani flourished at the court of Golconda. Firishta, the celebrated author of *Gulshani Ibrahimi*, a popular contemporary work on medieval Indian history, was one of the celebrities from the Deccan.[14] Similarly, the history of the Bahmani kingdom and that of the Nizamshahi dynasty of Ahmadnagar has been well preserved in the *Burhan i Ma'asir* of Sayyad Ali Tabataba who was an official at the court of Ahmadnagar. The muslim rulers of the Deccan were known to provide land grants, stipends and other handsome means of livelihood to any and every scholar of Persian and Arabic from abroad. It is said that the influx of foreign scholars to Golconda during the reign of sultan Ibrahim Qutubshah was so great that it became difficult to find accommodation for them within the walled city. It prompted the sultan to found a new city of Hyderabad in 1592 A.D.

Strange though it may seem, the Urdu language, which was born in the north, found Deccan to be a more fertile ground for its nourishment and growth. The Bahmani rulers used it as a means of communication of thought with their local populace with the result that Urdu drew freely from the spoken languages of the Deccan, including Marathi, Telugu and Kanarese, and with the passage of time, itself became known as the Deccani language. Khwaja Band Nawaz Gesui Daraz was the first scholar of the south to produce a treatise in Urdu, in the Persian script, entitled, *Mirat ul Ashiqin*. The sultans of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Golconda allowed Urdu to be used freely at their royal courts while Ibrahim Adilshah II was the first to make it the official language of Bijapur. Quite a few of the muslim rulers of Deccan were themselves poets and scholars of Urdu. Wajabi who wrote *Qutub Mushtri* and *Sabras*, and Faiz, the author of *Ruzwane Shah o Ruhafza*, adorned the court of Golconda. The *sufi* saints of the south produced religious treatises and wrote *masnavis* on spiritualism in the Urdu language; thus Shah Miran wrote *Khushnama* and Shah Aminuddin Ala composed *Rumuz us Satikin*. Muhammad

14. Firishta belonged to an aristocratic family from Persia; born in c. 1570 A.D; he migrated to south India in his early youth and spent most of his life at the Nizamshahi court of Ahmadnagar.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Nusrat, the author of *Gulshan i Ishaq*, *Alinama* and *Tarikh i Sikanderi* won acclaim as the outstanding scholar of Urdu throughout the Deccan.

Art and Architecture

Indo-Muslim art and architcture of tughluq style was introduced into the Deccan when Muhammad bin Tughlu q transferred his capital to Daulatabad (old Deogiri). None of the buildings constructed by the sultan and his nobility during the imperial era have survived the wear and tear of time. An independent Indo-Muslim style of architecture came into existence with the foundation of the Bahmani rule. It passed through three phases of growth corresponding to those of the political developments. The first phase lasted with the Gulbarga period of the Bahmani rule (1347—c. 1429 A.D.), and the second earmarked the period of their rule from Bidar. The third phase of the Deccani art and architecture, when it reached a stage of maturity, covered the period of rule of the successor states of the Bahmani kingdom. The construction of forts at all the strategic places in the kingdom constituted one of the major architectural activities of the Bahmani rulers. They showed unrestricted and unbiased use of all sorts of architectural concepts and technology, indigenous and foreign, 'hindu' and 'muslim' alike. Therefore, they form a special class of military architecture which shows free intermingling of all the best that was available to the Bahmanis on the spot.

The monuments of the Bahmani period at Gulbarga represent the first phase of development of the Indo-Muslim architecture in the Deccan. The tombs of the first three Bahmani rulers show marked influence of the tughluq style, reflected by thick walls, with a sharp slope, and with very little surface decoration although the mausoleum of Bahman Shah, the founder, which contains a beautiful band of deep blue enamel tiles of the purely Persian style reveals the induction of direct foreign influence. The Persian influence on the Bahmani art and architecture became more and more marked with the passage of time thus drifting it away from the Indo-Muslim traditions of northern India in many respects. The *jama masjid* of the Gulbarga fort, with its square base supporting the dome and the broad squat arches, set the style for this category of architecture in the Deccan. Unlike the mosques of northern India, it has no open courtyard and the whole of its area has been covered, permitting the light to trickle through its perforated side-walls and arches. To begin with, the indigenous or 'the hindu' influence on art and architecture seems to have been forcefully resisted by the Bahmani sultans primarily because of the superiority complex from which they suffered as the rulers of 'the vanquished infidels'. *Haft Gumbad* or 'the seven tombs' of sultan Mujahid Shah, Daud Shah and their family members at Gulbarga, however, show, at a later stage, some traces of the indigenous

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concepts of art and architectural traditions which became gradually acceptable to the Bahmani rulers. These seven tombs, built on a similar plan with decorative variations, show 'the hindu influence' for the first time in the carvings of the prayer niche, doorways of polished black-stone, carved in hindu fashion, and beautiful brackets supporting the cornice or the horizontal projections, crowning the buildings.

The second phase of the Bahmani art and architecture began with the transfer of its capital to Bidar. The massive fort of Bidar and its mosques and palaces continue to bear the Persian imprint *albeit* the indigenous hindu influence also becomes equally strong in their construction. The twelve tombs of the latter Bahmani rulers at Bidar reveal this intermixture of the Persian and indigenous influences almost in equal proportions. They are much larger in size than their counterparts at Gulbarga and contain more arched recesses, screen windows in the facade and decorative columns besides richly decorated enamel tiles and paintings in many and varied colours. The best of these tombs is that of sultan Ahmad Shah I (1422-35) which 'sets the fashion' at Bidar for the later tombs; its exterior, having a lofty and impressive entrance archway on each side, is divided into three storeys by recessed arches and windows, while its dome illustrates a happy combination of the flat dome of the Delhi style and the sound conical domes of Persia. But the main features of this tomb are the decorations of its interior which is adorned with paintings in bright gold, vermilion and green colours.'[15] Mahmud Gawan's *Madrassa* at Bidar has been constructed in the typical Persian style; it comprises a huge three-storey building with a rectangular plan, and contains a mosque, lecture-rooms, a library hall and the residential flats for the teachers. 'On its front side', writes Z.A. Desai, 'are two minarets, one at each corner, while semi-octagonal structures with bulbous domes project, one each, from the middle of the remaining three sides. The whole building is remarkable for the perfect symmetry and proportion of its various parts. Its front side was lavishly decorated with encaustic tiles of various colours and designs, and the minarets were also adorned with glazed tiles arranged in a zigzag pattern.' The *Sola Khamba* (viz; containing sixteen pillars) mosque of the Bidar fort is one of the best specimens of the second phase of development of the Bahmani architecture. Its vast prayer-hall is divided into 'a number of aisles by massive circular columns'. Its roof is 'crowned by a majestic dome of fine shape, raised on a high clerestory with windows of fine perforated screen-work in different geometrical patterns. A parapet of pleasing design above the imposing arcade of its facade adds to its picturesqueness.'[16]

15. Ziyauddin A. Desai, Indo-Islamic Architecture; *loc. cit.*, p. 31,
16. *ibid.*, p. 30.

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Daulatabad, the erstwhile Deogiri, had a rich indigenous architectural heritage; it was studded with numerous public buildings and palaces of the Yadava period which continued to be used without any prejudice towards their 'hindu' architectural style and plans of construction by the muslim ruling elite. A few of the new buildings erected by them showed a free blending of the indigenous north Indian and the Persian styles. The Chand Minar at Daulatabad, built in 1445 A.D. is a solitary example of a building constructed in that town in a typical Persian style. The tower rises to a height of 30.5 metres, slightly tapering in its ascent, and is divided into four storeys by projecting circular galleries. In spite of its being a declared Persian model, the brackets supporting its balconies belong to the indigenous architectural style.

The age of the five successor states of the Bahmani kingdom, viz; those of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, Berar and Bidar, marks the third and the final phase of development in the architecture of the Indo-Muslim style in the Deccan. During this period, it reached a stage of maturity and rightly came to be called as the Deccani art style. It showed a complete synthesis between the Persian and indigenous styles with the predominant influence of the latter; so to say, in its process of interaction, the 'Indian genius' established its superiority over the foreign influences. The Deccani art style retained a number of Persian traits in their modified form but it showed a much 'greater influence of the local traditions than before in building methods as well as in the field of ornament'. Not only this, it developed further regional variations from state to state, thus imparting to each a refreshness and individuality of its own. The finest specimens of the Bijapur style of architecture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are provided by the extant monuments such as the Zanjiri and Andu mosques at Bijapur, Sunehri mosque at Shahpur and Kali mosque at Lakshmeshwar, besides Ibrahim Rauza, Mehtar Mahal, Gagan Mahal and the Gol Gumbad—the mausoleum of Adil Shah (1627-56) at Bijapur. The Nizamshahi buildings at Ahmadnagar were influenced by the neighbouring Gujarat and Malwa style 'reflected in the fine quality of their building material as well as other architectural and decorative features'. Among the representative extant monuments of the Nizamshahi style may be mentioned the Damri mosque and the tombs of Ahmad Nizamshah (1490-1510), Rumi Khan and *Do-Boti-Chira* at Ahmadnagar, the tombs of Malik Amber and *Zachcha Bachcha* at Daulatabad, of Shah Ashraf Bayabani at Ambad and of Dilawar Khan at Khed, besides the water palace-cum-pleasure resort of Farah Bagh at Ahmadnagar. The state of Berar, having been annexed by Ahmadnagar could not develop an individualistic style of its own; nevertheless, the mosques of Gwaligarh, Ellichpur and Malkapur and *Hauza Katora*, a beautiful building, now standing in partial ruins in the middle of a water tank at Ellichpur, remind us of the brief but imaginative architectural activities of the Imadshahi rulers of Berar. After Bijapur, it was Golconda which provided the

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second best individualistic trait to the Deccani style of architecture. Golconda and Hyderabad adorn a number of extant monuments of the Qutubshahi period which impart a unique historic personality to these towns. The *Char Minar* of Hyderabad, which served as the main entrance to the royal building complex, is a memorable contribution of the Indian genius towards the development of architecture in India. It comprises a central square building structure with lofty arched openings on all the four sides. From each of its four corners, there rises a beautiful *minar* with a peculiar aesthetical excellence in its design and conception, the like of which is hard to find anywhere else. The space in between these minars, towards the top of the roof, is covered by 'a double screen of arched openings to bring symmetry to the whole building'.[17] The structural base of the *Char Minar* is very strong without being aggressive, and the building looks very delicate and pleasing to the eye without being unimpressive. The Baridshahi dynasty which transplanted the Bahmanis at Bidar in 1527 A.D., contributed its own share towards the development of the Deccani architecture, represented by some of their extant mosques and tombs. On the whole, the rulers of the Bahmani dynasty and its successor states made an invaluable contribution towards the development of education and learning, art and architecture and other socio-cultural aspects of the Deccan in the medieval period.

4: Life and Condition of People in the Vijayanagar State

Nature of the Vijayanagar State

The monarch of Vijayanagar, like the Bahmanis, were typical oriental despots with the difference that, being the sons of the soil, they commanded love and obedience from their subjects. They implemented the law of the land, abided by the time-honoured customs and traditions and safeguarded the indigenous religious and socio-cultural institutions. Unlike the rulers of the Bahmani kingdom, they shunned everything that was exotic in character and championed the cause of the civil liberties of their people. The despotic rule of Vijayanagar was, therefore, a product of the soil, which carried along with its despotic powers, the natural obligations and duties of the monarchs towards the land and its people and the indigenous socio-cultural traditions. From these points of view, it bore no comparison with the despotic rule of the Bahmanis who had established an alien military dictatorship in the Deccan by crushing the civil liberties of its original inhabitants. The Vijayanagar rulers were benevolent despots who undertook the happiness and welfare of their subjects to be their primary duty.

17. Z.A. Desai, Indo-Muslim Architecture, *op. cit.*, P. 42.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

The Vijayanagar rulers were aided and advised in the discharge of their royal functions by a council of ministers, and their court adorned the most talented men of the land, including the provincial governors, military warriors, brahman priests, scholars and artists *albeit*, theoretically, all of them were nominees of the crown and held office at the pleasure of the latter; the functions of the court were purely advisory in nature. The civil administration as well as the army organisation were based on hindu feudal system of the pre-muslim days which seems to have been faithfully preserved along with its manifold defects. The state, during the heyday of its glory, was divided roughly into 200 provinces which, for all intents and purposes, were akin to the feudal estates, each under the charge of a noble. Important governorships were held by princes of the royal blood, their kinsmen, friends and favourites. The governors enjoyed autonomous powers in their internal administration; they recruited their own armies and rendered military service to the king when needed. They paid to the royal exchequer not the net proceeds of revenue but a specified annual tribute. Many of the provincial units were actually ruled by hereditary feudal lords and princes. The provinces were divided into districts called *nadu* or *kottam*, each of which comprised a couple of *parganas* and some villages. The village *panchayats* administered their charge without much interference from the higher officials and helped in the maintenance of peace and tranquillity in the countryside.

Vijayanagar City and the Royalty

South India was visited by a number of adventurers, traders, scholars and diplomats from foreign countries during the period of Bahmani and Vijayanagar rule. Some of them have left accounts of the political, social, cultural and economic life of the people which are of invaluable help to us in the reconstruction of history of the times; they include among others, the chronicle of Abdur Razak, a Persian envoy to the court of Vijayanagar and the travelogues of Nicolo Conti, Duarte Barbosa, Fernao Nuniz and Domingos Paes. Nicolo Conti, a Venetian traveller who visited south India in c. 1420-21, gives the following description of the city of Vijayanagar :

> "The great city of Bizengaalia (Vijayanagar) is situated near very steep mountains. The circumference of the city is sixty miles; its walls are carried up to the mountains and enclose the valleys at their foot, so that its extent is thereby increased. In this city there are estimated to be ninety thousand men fit to bear arms."[18]

18. Refer to the travelogue of Nicolo Conti in R.H. Major, *India in the Fifteenth Century*; *loc. cit.*, Delhi reprint, pp, 1-39.

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Gandhi Memorial College of Education Bantalab Jammu

Abdur Razak, who was sent as an ambassador by sultan Shah Rukh of Khurasan to the court of Deva Raya II (1419-46), stayed in the south for about two years (1442-43). He gives an eye-witness account of the splendour of the Vijayanagar court and dwells at length on the character and personality of the reigning monarch, the magnificence of royal processions and festivals at the capital and the wealth and luxury of the nobility. He supplements the description of Vijayanagar town as given by Nicolo Conti, two decades earlier, in the following words:

> "The city of Bisanagar (Vijayanagar) is such that eye has not seen nor ear heard of any place resembling it upon the whole earth. It is so built that it has seven fortified walls, one within the other. Beyond the circuit of the outer wall there is an esplanade extending for about fifty yards, in which stones are fixed near one another to the height of a man; one half buried firmly in the earth, and other half rises above it, so that neither foot nor horse, however bold, can advance with facility near the outer wall."[19]

Domingos Paes, writing about Vijayanagar in c. 1520-22. observes:

> "...two leagues before you arrive at the city of Bisnaga (from the direction of Goa) you have a very lofty *serra* (a range of hills) which has passes by which you enter the city. These are called 'gates' (*partas*). You must enter by these for you will have no means of entrance except by them. This range of hills surrounds the city with a circle of twenty-four leagues, and within this range there are others that encircle it closely. Wherever these ranges have any level ground they cross it with a very strong wall in such a way that the hills remain all closed, except in the places where the roads come through from the gates in the first range, which are the entrance ways to the city."[20]

About the inhabitants and the wealth of Vijayanagar, Paes has to say that the 'people in this city are countless in number, so much so that I do not wish to write it down for fear it should be thought fabulous; but I declare that no troops, horse or foot could break their way through any street or lane, so great are the numbers of the people and elephants'. Elsewhere he writes that 'in this city you will find men belonging to every nation and people because of the great trade which it has, and the many precious stones there, principally diamonds.' The writer is unable to give an exact estimate of

19. Eng. trs. by R.H. Major in *ibid.*
20. "Narrative of Domingos Paes" in Sewell, A Forgotten Empire, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

the 'size of the city' because 'it cannot all be seen from any one spot'. 'This is the best provided city in the world', writes Paes, 'and is stocked with provisions such as rice, wheat, grains, Indian-corn, and a certain amount of barley and beans, *moong*, pulses, horse-gram and many other seeds which grow in this country which are the food of the people, and there is large store of these and very cheap. . . . The streets and markets are full of oxen without count, so that you cannot get along for them, and in many streets you come upon so many of them that you have to wait for them to pass, or else have to go by another way'.[21]

The author of the present study has purposely given these long extracts from the contemporary chronicles to bring home to the minds of the readers the sudden and sad plight of that fine edifice of human civilisation and culture, while at the apex of its glory. The once thought to be invincible stronghold, with the best of its defences, Vijayanagar succumbed to the virus of religious intolerance and mutual rivalry between the two major segments of the Indian society—hindus and muslims. The sack of Delhi by Amir Timur in 1398-99 pales into insignificance before the wanton destruction of the city of Vijayanagar and the annihilation of its populace by the victorious armies of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, Golconda and Bidar in 1565.

Glimpses of Socio-Cultural Life

Hindus constituted the bulk of the population under the Vijayanagar rule although a fairly large number of muslims and jews besides some European traders and businessmen also enjoyed happy and comfortable lives under the benevolent rule of the hindu monarchs. The latter adopted a policy of religious toleration towards all and did not discriminate between their hindu and muslim subjects. The caste system was deeply rooted among the hindus with all of its inherent vices. The *brahmans* were held in high esteem by the Vijayanagar rulers and they wielded tremendous influence on the socio-political life of the people; in fact, the medieval hindu society and culture of south India were what the *brahmans* had made them to be. Fernao Nuniz, in his observations about the Vijayanagar empire, made in 1535-37, records that the *brahmans* 'are honest men, given to merchandise, very acute and of much talent, very good to accounts, lean men and well-formed, but little fit for hard work'.[22] They acted as ministers as well as the political and religious advisers of the Vijayanagar rulers and held key-positions in the administrative hierarchy of the state. Nuniz further tells us that, besides the *brahmans*, 'there is another class who are Canarese who have pagodas in which are the images of

21. *ibid.*, p. 248.
22. For details refer to "Chronicle of Fernao Nuniz" in Robert Sewell, A Forgotten Empire, *op. cit.*, pp. 279-376.

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monkeys and cows, and buffaloes, and devils, to whom they pay much honour, and these idols and monkeys, which they adore, they say that, in former times, this land belonged all to the monkeys, and that, in those days, they could speak. They have books full of fine stories of chivalry, and many foolish tales about their idols, such as it is out of reason for men to believe. But because of this, neither in the kingdom of Besnaga (Vijayanagar) nor in all the land of the heathen are any monkeys killed, and there are so many in this country that they cover the mountains'.[23]

The upper strata of the south Indian society, including the ruling elite of Vijayanagar, landed aristocracy, businessmen and traders, and the *brahmans*, in general, were very well-off. The courtiers and the bureaucracy rolled in wealth which fostered luxury with its accompanied vices. Within the city of Vijayanagar, 'each class of men belonging to each profession' was said to have 'shops contiguous the one to the other.' Abdur Razak tells us that 'the jewellers sell, publicly in the bazar, pearls, rubies, emeralds and diamonds.' The hindu masses practised monogamy *albeit* the royalty and the aristocracy showed laxity in morals. Nicolo Conti informs us that those who could afford, 'marry as many wives as they please' and that 'these are burnt with their dead husbands'. Thus the practice of *sati* was prevalent and the *brahmans* forcefully commended this kind of 'self-immolation'. In the words of Nicolo Conti, the king of Vijayanagar 'takes to himself 12,000 wives, of whom 4,000 follow him on foot wherever he may go, and are employed solely in the service of the kitchen. A like number, more handsomely equipped, ride on horse-back. The remainder are carried by men in litters, of whom 2,000, or 3,000 are selected as his wives, on condition that at his death they should voluntarily burn themselves with him, which is considered to be a great honour for them.'[24] Nevertheless, the general condition of the women in the Vijayanagar empire is said to be fairly good. The women of the upper middle classes received higher education and some of them took up to the state-craft. We are told that the capital of Vijayanagar had women wrestlers, astrologers, sooth-sayers and a staff of women clerks and accountants to maintain the accounts of the royal household. Nuniz makes reference to the women scholars and writers, poets, musicians, and singers and observes that the monarch of Vijayanagar 'has judges as well as bailiffs and watchmen, who every night guard the palace and these are women'. The child-marriage was common and the dowries were freely demanded and proudly given. Abdur Razak also refers to the existence of brothels within the capital of Vijayanagar. Considerable laxity seems to have prevailed in the matter of food. The people took fruits, vegetables, fish and meat of all kinds except that of oxen or cows. To quote Nuniz,

23. *ibid.*, p. 371.

24. Refer to R.P. Mahajan, Foundation, Flourishing and Fall, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-39.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

"These kings of Bisnaga (Vijayanagar) eat all sorts of things, but not the flesh of oxen or cows, which they never kill in all the country of the heathens because they worship them. They eat mutton, pork, venison, partridges, hares, doves, quail, and all kinds of birds; even sparrows and rats, and cats, and lizards, all of which are sold in the market of the city of Bisnaga."[25]

But he hastily adds that 'everything has to be sold alive so that each one may know what he buys—that at least so far as concerns game, and there are fish from the rivers in large quantities.' We are further told that 'the markets are always overflowing with abundance of fruits, grapes, oranges, limes, promegranates, jackfruit and mangoes, and all very cheap.'[26]

Education and Learning

The monarchs of Vijayanagar were great patrons of education and learning; their period of rule was made glorious by the renaissance in Sanskrit—'the language of higher culture' in the south, and Vedic literature. It also witnessed tremendous growth and development of dravidian languages—Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam.[27] Bukka Rai (1356-77), one of the founding fathers of Vijayanagar, and the second ruler of the Sangama dynasty, took prompt steps to rehabilitate hindu religious and cultural institutions which had suffered a serious set-back during the muslim rule. Under his inspring leadership, scholars of Sanskrit, experts in hindu religion and philosophy, poets and artists flocked to the court of Vijayangar and initiated the process for the revival of ancient Indian and indigenous education and learning as well as art and architecture. The people came from all parts of south India and received patronage from the Vijayanagar court without any regional or sectarian prejudices; as a result, the scholars and the saints, men of letters and the arists, all worked in perfect harmony with one another to produce 'the synthetic culture of south India'; that was by far the greatest cultural achievement of the Vijayanagar empire. A galaxy of Sanskrit scholars, headed by Sayana, reproduced religious scriptures and rewrote commentaries on all the four *Vedas* and some of the *Brahmanas* and *Aranyakas*. Most of the Vijayanagar rulers and other members of the royalty were well-educated and some of them actually made literary contributions. Krishnadeva Raya (1509-30) was a genius as a scholar

25. Refer to Sewell, A Forgotten Empire; *op. cit.*, p. 356.

26. *ibid.*

27. Which owed a great deal to Sanskrit, 'the magic vand whose touch alone raised each of these dravidian languages from the level of a patois to that of a literary idiom.'—Nilakanta Sastri, History of South India, *op. cit.*, p. 340.

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of Sanskrit and Tamil; a born poet with love for philosophy as well as music, he attracted the most talented men and women of his age to his court and provided them the best opportunities for the display of their literary and artistic skills; his reign has rightly been called the 'dawn of a new era in the literary history of south India'. He is said to have contributed five books in Sanskrit besides the one in Tamil, entitled, *Amuktamalyada*. The profuse literature produced in Tamil during the Vijayanagar empire was next only to the Sanskrit literature of south India. The religious literature in Tamil was produced by *shaivites*, *vaishnavites* and the *jain* scholars; it comprised translations of ancient scriptures from Sanskrit to Tamil and preparation of commentaries thereon, recasting of the Puranic literature and some works on religious philosophy. Meykandar prepared *Siva Nana Bodam* 'a short treatise of a dozen *sutras*, perhaps translated from a Sanskrit original.'[28] The *Siva Nana Sittiyar* of Arunandi is considered to be a great classic of *saiva* doctrine in Tamil. In the beginning of the fifteenth century, two great scholar-saints, Svarupananda Desikar and his pupil Tattuvarayar prepared two anthologies on the philosophy of Advaita, entitled *Sivaprakasa Perundirattu* and *Kurundirattu*, which 'conserve much of the religious and philosophical literature of the silver age of *saivism* in the Tamil country that would otherwise have been lost'.[29] The last work on *saiva* philosophy was written by Velliyambla Tambiran with the title *Nanabharana Vilakham*. In the secular literature of the times, mention may be made of *Tanjai Vanam Kovai* of Poyyamoli and *Nalavenba* of Pugalendi. The *Bharatam* of Villiputturar, prepared in C. 1400 A.D., is an epic of great merit which tells the whole story of the *Mahabharata* in 4350 Tamil verses; 'the narrative style of the author and his rich diction marked by a profuse admixture of Sanskrit words and expressions make the poem a very attractive reading.'[30]

The transformation of Telugu as a language of literary merit starts with Nannaya's attempt to translate the *Mahabharata* into it during the reign of Rajaraja Narendra (1019-61) although his work remained incomplete. Tikkana (1220-1300), the greatest Telugu poet of his times, resumed the versification of the *Mahabharata* from where Nannaya had left; somehow he also could not complete the work which received finishing touches from Yerrapragada (1280-1350); the latter records that Tikkana had appeared to him in a dream and asked him to complete the *Mahabharata*. Yerrapragada, who became famous as Prabandha Paramesvara, proved his capability as an outstanding scholar and poet who 'begins his work in the style of Nannaya and, imperceptibly, passes into that of Tikkana'. All the translators of the

28. *ibid*; p. 382.
29. *ibid.*, pp. 387-88.
30. *ibid.*, p. 383.

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Mahabharata are held in the highest esteem by the Telugu scholars of medieval and modern ages alike. The work of translation and adaptation of Sanskrit scriptures and secular literature into Telugu preoccupied the scholars of that language during the Vijayanagar empire. Vemana, the author of popular *Sataka* verses, and Virabhadra who versified Kalidasa's *Shakuntala* into Telugu, were some of the other famous scholars of Telugu. More original and standard works in Telugu started coming forth with the reign of Krishnadeva Raya whose court adorned, among others, Allasani Peddana who was honoured with the royal title of *Andhrakavita-pitamaha*—'the Grandfather of Telugu Poetry.' The period of Vijayanagar empire constitutes the formative age in the development of Kannada and Malayalam languages too. The first Kannada scholar of this age was Madhura who wrote, in C. 1385, *Dharmanathapurana* on the fifteenth jain *tirthankara* during the reigns of Harihar II and Devaraya I. Palkunki Somanatha wrote many books on *vira-saivism* in Telugu and Kannada languages; and Mallanarya, who lived in the court of Krishnadeva Raya, likewise produced valuable literature in Kannada and Sanskrit. The scholarship in Sanskrit was a prerequisite for attaining recognition or competence in the dravidian languages. *Karnataka Sabdanusasana* of Bhattakalanka Deva, composed in 1604 A.D, was the most comprehensive grammar of Kannada in 592 Sanskrit *sutras* with a glossary (*vritti*) and commentary (*vyakhya*) in the same language.[31] *Unnunili Sandesam*, an anonymous poem of the early fourteenth century, is the first standard literary work in Malayalam; it is based on the model of Kalidasa's *Meghaduta*. Nambudiri *brahmans* introduced a new class of Malayalam literature called *Chakkiyarkuttu* which aimed at a dance-recital of the famous literary works; usually the Puranic stories and other literary traditions of the past formed the themes of this literature. Rama Panikkar, one of the Niranam poets, and described by the critics as the 'Chaucer of Malayalam', composed *Ramayanam*, *Bharatagatha*, *Savitri Mahatmyam*, *Brahmandapuranam* and *Bhagavatam*. Madhava Panikkar translated *Bhagawad Gita* from Sanskrit into Malayalam. Cherusseri Nambudiri, the author of *Krishnagatha*, heralded the literature of modern Malayalam.[32]

Art and Architecture

The south Indian art and architecture, which had reached the pinnacle of its glory in the pre-muslim period, received barbarous treatment at the hands of the armies of Islam led by Alauddin Khalji and his military generals. One of the declared objectives of the Vijayanagar empire was to preserve and develop 'all that had remained of Hinduism against the onslaughts of Islam'. Revival of Brahmanism was the immediate outcome of the Vijayanagar

31. *ibid.*, pp. 404-5.
32. *ibid.*, p. 419.

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revolution in the south. Temple building activity and patronage to all the ancient fine arts, including sculpture, painting, music, dancing and the like engaged the wholehearted attention of the Vijayanagar court which received enthusiastic cooperation and liberal financial contributions from rich and the poor alike. The partially ruined temples were repaired and enlarged, and given new face-lift; new temples on very elaborate plans were constructed over the ruins of the old and elsewhere. The different schools of ancient architecture of south India pooled their resources to evolve new art forms and architectural plans. The newly constructed temples were usually of massive structure, lofty stature and very extensive in dimensions to accommodate hundreds and thousands of the devotees within their premises. Among the new additions to the temple architecture may be mentioned as the *kalyanamandapa* or 'ornate pillared pavilion' built in the left corner of the courtyard, varied and most artistic use of the pillars for the extension of buildings and construction of huge audience halls, and profuse ornamentation giving vent to the entire range of ancient Indian sculptural and ornamental forms and painting, etc., 'a thousand pillared *mandapa*' became an ideal form of the Vijayanagar style of temple architecture. Amidst the stoneheaps of the once magnificent Vijayanagar city can still be seen a few partially ruined monuments of exquisite beauty which defied the clubs and hammers of the vandals; they are the Vitthala and Hazara Ram temples, the Throne Platform and the King's Audience Hall, supported by ten rows of ten pillars each. Most of the famous temples of modern India, situated to the south of the Tungbhadra were constructed during the Vijayanagar era; the town of Kumbakonam, Kanchipuram, Srirangam, Tadpatri, Vellore and Virinchipuram are adorned with such historic temples which constitute the places of pilgrimage and worship for the millions. The last phase of the Vijayanagar architecture is represented by the Madura style which continued to flourish even after the fall of the empire; the specimen temples of this style are found at Madura, Rameswaram, Srirangam, Jambukevvara, Tiruvalur, Chidambaram, Tinnevelly and many other places in the extreme south.

Wealth and Prosperity of Vijayanagar Empire

By all accounts, Vijayanagar was the most extensive and richest of all the states of India in the fifteenth and the first half of the sixteenth century. It owed its prosperity to the growth and development of agriculture and industry, trade and commerce including the voluminous maritime trade with the foreign countries. According to Abdur Razzak, there were 300 seaports in the empire which established its commercial contacts with Persia, Arabia, Africa, Malaya Archipelago, Burma, China and the numerous islands in the Indian Ocean. South India exported cloth, rice

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indigo, iron, salt petre, diamonds, sugar, and spices; and received, in return, horses, pearls, copper, china-silk and velvet, etc. Ship-building industry flourished in the coastal towns. The foreigners who visited the court of Vijayanagar were simply amazed to observe the fabulous wealth of the ruling elite and richness of its people. The vast quantities of gold, diamonds and material wealth possessed by the inhabitants of Vijayanagar was beyond the comprehension or estimation of Domingos Paes and other foreigners. Abdur Razzak alludes, with bewilderment, to the existence of 'chambers with excavations' in the royal treasury of Vijayanagar which had been filled up with molten gold to form one mass', and Paes tells us that the citizens of Vijayanagar 'high or low,' even down to the artificers of the *bazar*, wear jewels and gift ornaments in their ears and around their necks, arms, wrists and fingers.' No wonder, south India wss 'a golden sparrow' of the east during the age of the Vijayanagar empire and it rightly excited the curiosity and envy of the foreigners who visited its coasts in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Advent of the Portuguese

The Portuguese discovered the sea-route to India via 'the Cape of Good Hope' during the age of Bahmani and Vijayanagar kingdoms. Vasco da Gama led a naval fleet of three ships, sponsored by the Portuguese government, to Calicut in 1497 and received a cordial treatment from its local hindu chieftain. The Portuguese were thus the first of the European powers to re-establish their trade contacts with India after a long break.[33] Nevertheless, they adopted an aggressive and violent attitude towards the Asians in general and incurred their displeasure; they displayed religious fanaticism and also resorted to slave trade. Albuquerque seized Goa by force from its Bahmani governor in 1510 A.D; and converted it into a permanent Portuguese base on the Indian soil; Diu and Daman were acquired by them soon afterwards. On the whole, they maintained friendly relations with the emperors of Vijayanagar and sought trade privileges from them.

The Portuguese enjoyed the monopoly of the eastern trade for over a century until they received an effective challenge from the Dutch, the French and the English in the seventeenth century.

33. India had been in trade relations with Europe through land as well as the Red Sea long before the beginning of the Christian era. With the occupation of Constantinople by the turks in 1453, these trade routes fell under their control and became unsafe. It initiated European efforts to discover an alternative trade route to India; Vasco da Gama was crowned with success in this enterprise.

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11

Administration of the Sultanate

1: Political Theory of the Sultanate

The Islamic Theory of State

The sultanate of Delhi was declared 'an Islamic state' by its turko-afghan rulers. They had brought with them a theocratic concept of state, according to which the head of the state was also regarded as the religious leader of his people—'the millat', and was believed or presumed to derive his position and authority from God. By force of circumstances, the Prophet Muhammad on his *hijrat* or 'migration' from Mecca to Medina, was called upon to assume the political leadership of his followers for the protection of their lives and property. He thus laid the foundation of the first muslim state in the world and assumed a double role as founder of Islam as well as temporal head of 'the faithful'. God was said to be the true ruler of 'the faithful' and the Prophet ruled over them on behalf of the Almighty with the object of enforcing and spreading the Quranic law which had been declared as 'a divine revelation' by the Prophet himself. Therefore, 'the muslim state', from its very inception, was a theocracy[1] *par excellence*. The ideas from Greek political philosophy were actually borrowed by the muslim theologians in their attempt to provide 'a legal basis' to and put forward as 'the rational justification' for the institutions adopted or developed by them.[2] In the words of Ishwara Topa,

1. The word theocracy is derived from the Greek *theos*, meaning God; it implies 'a government or state, governed by God directly or through a sacerdotal class.' It envisages 'direct intervention and authority of God through revelation in government of society'.—*Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 1968 ed; p. 1344.
   Similarly, *Chamber's Twentieth Century Dictionary* (1950 ed; p. 1005) defines theocracy as 'that constitution of a state in which the Almighty is regarded as the sole sovereign, and the laws of the realm as divine commands rather than human ordinances—the priesthood necessarily becoming the officers of the invisible ruler'.
2. *BVB* VI, p. 438.

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"The Prophet of Islam founded a theocratic state. It was a system of political and social control, based on divine sanctions. It reflected the will of God in its movements and activities. Its desire was to Islamise life in accordance with the law of God. Its dictates were divine laws to be imposed on human beings for their guidance. The aim of the Prophet was to organise and discipline people into a nation in which religious diversions, social inequality, political disunity, and economic exploitation should not exist.....The law of Islam was the law of the Islamic state."[3]

Thus, Islam[4] does not separate religion from politics; in fact, the concept of religion in Islam emerged first, the state was 'an after-thought.'[5] The traditional Islamic law does not acknowledge 'the independent existence of state, nor is state regarded as a primary condition of human society.[6] It makes the state completely subservient to the religion of the Prophet. According to the Islamic law, the state is only an instrument to serve the creed in the attainment of its objectives or fulfilment of ideals of the muslim brotherhood. The Islamic theory of state was, therefore, based on a threefold idea of one scripture, one sovereign and one nation; scripture was the holy *Quran*,[7] sovereign was the *imam* (leader), also called *khalifa* (the caliph)—political successor to the Prophet, and nation was the *millat*—the muslim brotherhood. The basic feature of the state, according to this theory, was its 'indivisibility' in all the three aspects. It contemplated the establishment of a theocratic state based on the Islamic law, and recommended only one sovereign, the caliph, to rule over the whole of the muslim world. The caliph was styled as the *amir ul momnin*—'the leader of the faithful'; his office was thus a political institution based on Islamic injunctions. The sovereignty resided in the *millat* which elected their

3. *Politics in Pre-Mughal Times*; Kitabistan, Allahabad & London, 1938, p. 39.
4. derived from the word *salim*—'to resign or surrender oneself to the will, service and command of God; Islam, therefore, refers to the act of resigning oneself to the will of God; and muslim is one who professes Islam. The term was coined and applied by the Prophet to his newly founded religion.
5. U.N. Day, *Mughal Government*; Munshiram Manoharlal, p. 1.
6. *ibid.*
7. derived from *qurra*—'to read'; the title, therefore, means 'reading' or rather that which is to be read. The *Quran* contains the revelations which the Prophet Muhammad professed to have received from time to time, chiefly through the mediation of the angel Gabriel, which the Prophet delivered as a divine message to those about him; that is why it has been called the *Ilm-i-Allah* or 'the Word of God'. The *Quran* contains 114 *suras* or chapters of unequal length.
   Sura is a Hebrew word which means a row or series of stones in a building structure or the steps; it also means a line in a book or letters; with application to the *Quran*, each *sura* represents, as it were, a distinct row or step in the building of the whole.

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imam or the caliph, and the latter was under religious obligation to implement the Islamic law on and for the benefit of his muslim subjects. The Islamic government was, therefore, one which was composed of the muslims, by the muslims and existed for the happiness and welfare of the muslims alone.

The Islamic theory of state had gradually developed and undergone radical changes long before the establishment of the sultanate of Delhi. The monarchical form of government, the basic feature of the sultanate, was itself an extra-Quranic growth which had evolved and entered the fold of Islam on the Persian soil.

Nature and Character of the Sultanate

The sultanate of Delhi was 'an Islamic state' whose monarchs, the dominant nobility and the higher administrative hierarchy belonged to the muslim faith. Theoretically, the sultans were expected to enforce the Islamic law (*shairat*) in the land and administer their dominions in a way as to transform the *dar ul harb* —'the land of the infidels', into *dar ul Islam*. They professed nominal allegiance to the caliph and felt pride in obtaining investiture from him. With the exception of Alauddin Khalji and Mubarak Shah Khalji, all other sultans styled themselves as deputies of the caliph with the titles such as *nasir i amir ul momnin*—'assistant of the leader of the faithful', or *yamin ulkhalifa*—'the right-hand man of the caliph'. In actual practice, however, the sultans were sovereign rulers who did not derive their powers from, nor depended upon any external force; they were independent rulers of their territorial possessions and did not owe their sovereignty to any worldly power, neither the caliph nor the *millat*. However, being foreign adventurers, who were called upon to rule over vast territories of the country, inhabited primarily by the hindus, they thought it politically expedient to maintain formal contacts with the Islamic world beyond the Khyber so as to produce a psychic of fear among the hindus by alluding to the potential source of their strength. Similarly, theoretically speaking, the sovereignty resided in the *millat* which was supposed to elect the sultan but, in actual practice, the *millat* served as the mainstay of the muslim monarchy, in general. The *millat* could voice its approval or disapproval of the policies and actions of a particular sultan *albeit* it could neither elect a sultan according to the modern democratic norms nor depose an incompetent or unworthy ruler. The kingdom of Delhi was carved out and extended by some capable and ambitious military generals by force of arms and they wielded the crown by their ability and military prowess alone. Moreover, the overwhelming majority of their *raiyyat*—'the subjects', happened to be non-muslims and the so-called *millat* constituted but a part of it.

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According to the traditional Islamic theory of state, the sultans usually professed to administer the Islamic law though the political institutions set up by them did not always conform to the orthodox Islamic principles. These were deeply influenced by the Indian traditions and customs and incorporated many elements of the rajput polity with or without modifications. Some of the practices and policies of the sultanate were actually opposed to the spirit of the traditional Islamic law. The real strength or weakness of the sultanate depended on the personality and character of the sultan. His government was based on highly centralised despotic principles. Some of the sultans formally introduced the Islamic law within their dominions, *albeit* there was no rule of law in the sultanate; the word of the sultan was treated as law. Alauddin Khalji, backed by a strong army, could. afford to defy the Islamic principles of government and administration, make the *ulema* subservient to him, and declare that he was the state, as did Louis XIV of France, at a later stage.

The founding fathers of the sultanate did not belong to any ruling house or families of high social status, they started their career as slaves, not even as ordinary free citizens. Therefore, they did not claim any noble pedigree or hereditary right to hold the crown; even if they did, none took them seriously. There was no fixed law of succession to the throne among them. Assumption of the crown depended on the dictums—'survival of the fittest' and 'might is right'; the sultanate of Delhi, therefore, was 'a police state' whose strength or weakness depended exclusively on the military prowess and pesonality of its 'despotic' sultan.[8]

2: Treatment of Non-Muslims in the Sultanate

The Islamic theory of state did not permit the existence of any religion other than Islam; none but the muslims were considered to be the rightful citizens of 'an Islamic state'.[9] Nevertheless, the existence of some non-muslims, who refused to embrace Islam, had to be tolerated within the territorial jurisdictions of an Islamic state from its very inception under the leadership of the Prophet himself. The 'nonbelievers' were divided into two broad categories—*ahl e kitab* or 'those who possessed some sort of revealed scripture, and *kafirs*—'the infidels'. The jews and christian inhabitants of Medina were recognised by the Prophet as *ahl e kitab* and granted protection and partial religious toleration in return for the receipt of *jaziya*—'the poll tax' from them. The term *jaziya*, which is derived from *jaza*, means 'compensation of requittal from good or evil' ; the Quran says:

8. Refer to K.A. Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*; Asia, 1961, pp. 110-11.

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"Fight ye those who believe not in Allah, nor in the Final Day;
Who do not make taboo that which has been made taboo by Allah and His Apostle;
Who follow not the teachings true among the Peoples of the Book;
Until they willingly offer *jaziya* and are quite subdued."[10]

Accordingly, *jaziya* was originally levied upon non-muslims 'as a sign of humiliation, and compensation for security of life and property in a muslim state' and also as 'compensation for military service' from which they, 'being unbelievers', were exempt.[11] Those who paid the *jaziya* were called *zimmis* or 'the people under contract of protection by the Islamic state.' To begin with, only jews and christians were given the status of *zimmis* but, at a later stage, the zoroastrians, who were declared to be *musahab ahl e kitab* or 'those who resembled the possessors of revealed scriptures' were also included in this category. All the rest of the non-muslims, commonly styled as *kafirs* and *mushriks*—'infidels' or 'Idolators', were denied the right of existence in a truly Islamic state. They were dubbed eternal enemies of Islam and condemned as *kable e gardan zadni* or 'those who were fit to be beheaded or extirpated'; they were confronted with either of the two alternatives—'Islam or Death'. The *Quran* issues the following instructions to 'the faithful'—

"Say thou to the unbelievers,
If (even now) they would desist (from infidelity), the past will be forgiven them;
But if they still persist (there starteth then) the example of those who had preceded them.
Then fight ye them until there is left no harassment, and the worship of Allah is altogether feasible."[12]

It is now a part of history that, during the very lifetime of the Prophet, the jews and christians of Medina, who had, in all humility accepted their inferior status as *zimmis* and begun to pay *jaziya* to 'the first muslim state', proved irksome to the 'true believers' and the Prophet was constrained to turn them out of Medina. Umar I

9. 'A muslim state' was said to be one which was either ruled by muslims or peopled by them.
10. The *Quran*; *sura* 2 (*Barat*), verse 29—trs. by Hashim Amir Ali, Charles E. Tuttle Company, Japan, 1974.
11. U.N. Day, *Administrative System of Delhi Sultanate* (1206-1413); Kitab Mahal, 1959, p. 88.
12. The *Quran*; sura 8, verses 38 & 39.

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(634-44 A.D.), the most famous of the Pious Caliphs, following in the footprints of the Prophet, expelled the jews and christians from the whole of Arabia, thus converting the homeland of the arabs into a true *dar ul Islam*.[13] The Prophet and the Pious Caliphs had thereby set the example of religious intolerance towards their non-muslim subjects, which was treated as an ideal by the orthodox muslim rulers.[14]

Muhammad bin Qasim, who laid the foundation of the muslim rule in Sind and Multan (711-12), secured the status of *zimmis* for his hindu subjects from the caliph and accorded protection to their lives and property on the receipt of *jaziya*. Obviously, this step was necessitated as a matter of political expediency because, in spite of the loss of independence, the hindu masses, in general, offered dogged resistance to forced conversions. It was physically impossible for Qasim and handful of his arab followers to compel the vanquished multitude 'to choose between Islam and death', particularly, when they were 'armed to the teeth'.[15] Recognition of hindu 'idolators' as *zimmis* by Qasim proved to be a 'momentous decision'[16] because such a concession had earlier been denied to the 'idolators' of Arabia. His example was followed by the turko-afghan rulers of Delhi in their dealings with the hindus. The latter were not treated as full-fledged citizens of 'the Islamic state' *albeit* they received the status of *zimmis*—'the second-class' or 'inferior' citizens, which denied them all political rights and made them suffer from certain socio-religious and economic disabilities so as 'to prevent them from growing strong'. There developed, with the passage of time, four schools of thought for the authoritative

13. P.K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*; London, 5th ed; 1958, p. 177.

14. The Umayyad Caliph Umar II discriminated against his christian subjects; they were excluded from all public offices. The first Abbasid Caliph, Saffah, was 'a narrow-minded bigot' who persecuted all the non-muslim subjects of his empire. Even the great Harun al Rashid, under the influence of orthodox *ulema*, felt obliged to deprive the christians of their socio-religious liberties. In 807 A.D., he issued an ordinance by which all churches 'in the border countries' were to be demolished and the non-muslims were to dress differently from muslims. In Africa, Ibrahim ibn Aghlab passed severe law against the christians and the jews.—For details refer to K.D. Bhargava, *A Survey of Is amic Culture and Institutions*; Kitab Mahal, Allahabad, 1961, pp. 31-34.

15. A. B.M. Habibullah, *Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*; Allahabad, 2nd ed; 1961, p. 322.

16. A.L. Srivastava, *Medieval Indian Culture*; Shivalal Agarwala & Co., Agra, 1964, p. 5.

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interpretation of *shara* or the Islamic law[17]; these were known as Malakite, Shafiite, Hanbalite and Hanafite after the names of their founders—Malik ibn Anas (715-95 A.D.) Ash-Shafi (767-820), Ahmad bin Hanbal (780-855) and Abu Hanifah[18] (699-766). Doctors of the first three schools offered no other alternative but death to 'the idolators', including the hindus, on their refusal to embrace Islam. It were the exponents of the Hanifah school alone who permitted their existence in the Islamic state as *zimmis*. That explains the intense hatred of the non-muslims by the orthodox muslim fanatics, in general; whenever a muslim ruler fell under the spell of such orthodox *ulema*, he adopted the policy of religious intolerance and persecution of his hindu subjects. It created a permanent gulf between the hindus and muslims which could not be bridged effectively for a long time.

With the growth of autocracy among the sultans of Delhi, their treatment towards their subjects—hindus as well as muslims, assumed some uniformity. Ghiasuddin Balban (1266-86), the greatest 'slave' sultan of Delhi, who consolidated the turkish rule in northern India, established an absolute monarchy by suppressing all opposition to the crown, which came from within his own religious community. As the self-styled 'viceregent of God on earth' (*Zill i Ilahi*) Balban intended to make it known that he was above law as well as the turkish ruling elite including the *ulema*, who constituted the very backbone of 'the Islamic state'.

Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316), the greatest sultan of Delhi, attempted to separate religion from politics altogether. In order to strengthen his autocratic rule, he crippled the power of the nobility and feudal aristocracy and did not give the *ulema* a free hand in determining the state policies. He was a highly self-willed man, with unscrupulous and aggressive temperament who never brooked interference into the state affairs by the nobility or the *ulema*. The nobles were kept firmly under his thumb by the sultan while the *ulema*, though kept in good humour, were seldom taken into confidence in the pursuit of his political or administrative measures. Of course, Alauddin took care not to antagonise the *mullas* and *sheikhs* through public criticism or ridicule. The muslim scholars, saints and divines received liberal stipends (*madad i*

17. It is based on (i) the holy *Quran*, (ii) *Sunna* or *Hadis*—'the traditions of the Prophet,' (iii) *Ijma*—unanimous agreement or consensus of opinion among the *mujtahidin*—'the great doctors of Islam'. The fourth source or foundation of the Islamic law is called the *Qias* which means 'measuring or reasoning by analogy of the learned doctors of Islam, the *mujtahidin*, with regard to certain difficult or doubtful questions of doctrine and practice by comparing them with similar cases already settled by the authority of the *Quran*, *Sunna* or *Ijma*, thus arriving at the solution of the undecided question.—*The Dictionary of Islam*; p. 198.

18. K.A. Nizami, Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India, *op. cit*; pp. 36-37.

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muash) and honours from the state. All posts in the judicial and educational establishments were reserved for them; their chiefs were given a free hand in administering the educational institutions, courts, holy places, religious endowments and charitable funds. They also enjoyed sufficient freedom of action in tackling the socio-religious problems of the muslim community. At times, Alauddin sucessfully exploited muslim fanaticism in his wars against the hindu chieftains and treatment of the *zimmis*. Nevertheless, he was the first among the sultans of Delhi to separate religion from state politics; he initiated what may be called a secular state policy based on the principles of absolute despotism. Barani has to say that Alauddin Khalji,

> "came to the conclusion that polity and government are one thing, and the rules and decrees of (Islamic) Law are another. Royal commands belong to the king, legal decrees rest upon the judgment of *qazis* and *muftis*. In accordance with this opinion, whatever affair of state came before him, he only looked to the public good, without considering whether his mode of dealing with it was lawful or unlawful. He never asked for legal opinions about political matters, and very few learned men visited him."[19]

Alauddin Khalji liberalised the state policy in the matter of recruitment of the public services. Ever since the inception of the sultanate, Persian had been introduced as the court language as well as the medium for the transaction of the state business. To begin with, it proved as a handicap to the Indians, including the hindu converts to Islam, in securing employment under the mamluk sultans. With the passage of time, however, the Indian converts took up the study of this language with enthusiasm; they were followed in this though hesitatingly, by the hindus. By the turn of the century, the number of Persian-educated Indians, including hindus and muslims, had grown fairly large; it was, therefore, quite natural that they should aspire to seek employment for career under the government of the day. The mamluk sultans had reserved all the higher posts for the foreign immigrants; they exercised racial discrimination in the matter of recruitment to such services. This policy was discarded by Alauddin Khalji who threw open the public services to commoners, including the non-privileged muslim immigrants, Indian converts to Islam, and even the hindus. It made him very popular with his subjects. His economic reforms, involving the fixation of prices, control of the markets and rationing of the consumers' goods, though not based on very scientific principles, were a unique contribution, envisaged by him far ahead of his times. In certain matters of land reforms, military organisation, and socio-economic policies,

19. *Tarikh i Firozeshahi*, p. 188.

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Alauddin Khalji anticipated Sher Shah Sur: his administrative set up carried the seeds of a progressive and secular state, which given the peace and stability for two or three generations more could have ushered in an era of peace and prosperity, and advanced the progress of the country by at least two centuries. The fiscal policy of Alauddin Khalji, including the land reforms, price control and market regulations, overhauled the Indian economy, promoted trade and commerce, and exercised a deep impact on the socio-economic condition of his urban as well as rural subjects, hindus and muslims alike.

3: Central Government

The Sultan

The muslim rulers of Delhi assumed the title of 'sultan'; it remained in vogue throughout the early medieval period and was popular even among the provincial regional muslim dynasties which sprang up on the ruins of the sultanate. Babar was the first muslim monarch of India who replaced this title with that of *padshah* in 1526. The term 'sultan' connoted 'power' or 'authority' and was sometimes applied to the provincial governors of the Caliphs who were entrusted with the administration of their charge. Mahmud of Ghazni was perhaps the first independent muslim ruler who styled himself as 'sultan'. By the time the turks conquered India, this term had become a popular and universally recognised title for the sovereign muslim rulers.

The sultans of Delhi were, therefore, independent rulers of their territorial possessions and did not owe their sovereignty to any earthly power, neither the Caliph nor the *millat*. Their nominal allegiance to the Caliph was a matter of courtesy or at the best a socio-political expediency. Theoretically, sovereignty resided in the *millat* which was supposed to elect the sultan but, in actual practice, the *millat* served as the mainstay of the muslim monarchy in general. The *millat* could voice its approval or disapproval of the policies and actions of a particular sultan *albeit* it could neither elect a sultan according to the modern democratic norms nor depose an incompetent or unworthy ruler. The kingdom of Delhi was carved

20. For details refer to—
I.H. Qureshi, *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, Lahore, 1944.
R.P. Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*; 2nd ed; Allahabad; 1959.
Yusuf Husain, *Indo-Muslim Polity* (Turko-Afghan Period; Simla, 1971.
K.A. Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*; loc. cit.
U.N. Day, *The Government of the Sultanate*, New Delhi, 1972.

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out and extended by some capable and ambitious military generals by force of arms and they wielded the crown by their ability and military powers alone. Moreover, overwhelming majority of their *raiyyat*—'the subjects', happened to be non-muslims and the so-called *millat* constituted but a part of it.

The strength or weakness of the sultanate depended upon the personality and character of the sultan. His government was based on highly centralised despotic principles. Some of the sultans formally introduced the Islamic law within their dominions, *albeit* there was no rule of law in the sultanate; word of the sultan was treated as law. Alauddin Khalji, backed by a strong army, could afford to defy the Islamic principles of government and administration, make the *ulema* subservient to him and declare that he was the state. No wonder, sultan occupied the most privileged position in the administrative set up of the sultanate. He was a military despot; all the powers of the state, whether executive, legislative, judicial or military, were concentrated in his hands. He was the pivot round which the entire administrative structure of the sultanate revolved. The sultan was the chief executive, sole legislator, the fountain-head of justice and the supreme commander of the armed forces. He made appointments to all the top civil and military offices and the entire bureaucracy functioned under his personal direction and control. The muslim jurists assigned ten functions or duties to the sultan in his capacity as the chief executive of an Islamic state. These comprised, protection of the faith, defence of the muslim territories, protection of the frontiers of the state against foreign aggression, war against the enemies of Islam, enforcement of the criminal code and maintenance of law and order, administration of justice, collection of revenues, disbursement of grants and wages to those who deserved an allowance from the public exchequer, appointment of trustworthy and capable counsellors and administrators and control of the public affairs through personal inspections and supervision of the administrative machinery. The sultan forfeited his claim to the throne if he failed to perform these duties deliberately or disregarded them wilfully. His duties towards the non-muslim subjects were also well-defined by the Islamic law. The 'infidels' were not treated as full-fledged citizens of the Islamic state; nevertheless, once they acknowledged the suzerainty of the state and agreed to pay *jaziya*, they acquired the status of the *zimmis*, and the sultan was under obligation to protect their lives and property and accord them freedom of worship and social life.

The Ministers

The sultan was assisted in the discharge of his functions by a number of dignitaries. Delhi as the metropolis of Islamic culture in the subcontinent attracted rich talent from all over the muslim world. The sultans were great patrons of foreign immigrants who were readily absorbed into the imperial service according to their

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qualifications, competence and taste. Reputed generals, experienced administrators, scholars and the theologians flocked to their court and offered services to the state. The sultan, therefore, enjoyed wonderful opportunities to select from among the wisest and experienced men of the age as his counsellors, ministers, heads of the departments and military generals. The business of the state was transacted in a magnificent *durbar* of the royal court which by itself constituted an important political institution of the times. The sultans organised their courts on the Persian model and spent lavishly on their maintenance. A review of Balban's court, as given elsewhere in this study, throws a flood of light on this institution.

To begin with, the sultans of the 'slave dynasty' constituted four ministers at the top level; these were held by the *wazir*, the *ariz-i-mamalik*, the *diwan-i-insha*, and the *diwan-i-risalat*. After sometime there came into existence an extraordinary officer of the state, styled as *naib ul mulk* or *malik naib*—'the regent' or the deputy sultan. At occasions, the offices of the *wazir* and *malik naib* were held by one and the same person particularly when the sultan happened to be weak. Under normal circumstances, however, the *malik-naib* enjoyed less powers than those wielded by the *wazir*. When the sultanate was well established, two more departmental heads were raised to the status of central ministers; they were the *sadr-us-sadur* and the *diwan-i-qaza*. The commander of the royal army, next after the sultan, the crown prince, if so nominated, and the above mentioned six or seven dignitaries constituted the nucleus of the council of advisers, called *majlis-i-am* or *majlis-i-khalwat* which comprised the most trusted and the highest officers of the state. The sultan generally discussed all important matters of the realm in this council. It had no constitutional validity, of course. It was only an advisory council, a consultative body whose decisions were not binding on the sultan; nevertheless, a wise sultan preferred to carry his counsellors with him in the formulation and implementation of important state policies.

The *wazir*, also styled as *vakil* or the *vakil-us-sultanate*, was the prime minister and his department was called the *diwan-i-wizarat*. The *wazir* was head of the finance department and usually held overall charge of the entire administrative set up; he stood midway between the sultan and his subjects. He did not, however, possess disciplinary control over the other central ministers. As head of the finance department, the *wazir* laid the fiscal policy of the state in consultation with the sultan, tapped the various sources of income, made arrangements for collection and safe custody of the revenues and exercised complete control over the expenditure on civil as well as military establishments. He was assisted in the discharge of his financial duties by two junior ministers—*mushrif* and *mustafi*. The *mushrif* could be defined as the accountant-general while the *mustafi* functioned somewhat like an auditor-general. The *naib-i-mamlikat* acted

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as deputy to the prime minister. The *wazir* recruited higher civil services with the approval of the sultan and exercised control over the bureaucracy. The *wazir* was, of course, the most trustworthy associate of the sultan who acted in harmony with the sovereign. A powerful minister always stood the chance to dominate his weak master and behave as *de facto* ruler by making the sultan a puppet in his hands.

Ariz i mamalik

The head of the army establishment or the ministry of defence, was the *diwan i arz*. He was responsible for the organisation and maintenance of the royal army and exercised disciplinary control over it *albeit* he was not an *ex-officio* commander-in-chief. His duties included recruitment of the defence personnel, fixation of their salaries, preparation of the muster rolls, equipment of the army and its deployment at the capital or other strategic places within the dominions or along the borders. The review of the army and branding of the horses was done by the *ariz i mamalik*. It was a part of his duty to construct, maintain and garrison the forts. In times of war, the *ariz i mamalik* prepared and allocated the contingents for action. Very often he accompanied the armies on the war front and acted in subordination to the commander-in-chief. He made the commissarial arrangements and met the multifarious needs of the soldiers. After the military operation, the *ariz i mamalik* supervised the booty and secured the share of the state from the soldiers. The defence personnel looked to him for promotions, enhancement of emoluments and other privileges. The strength, efficiency and discipline of the royal armies depended much upon the character and competence of the *ariz i mamalik*. He was assisted in the discharge of his duties by one or more *naibs* or deputy ministers.

Diwan-i-insha

The department of correspondence and records of the royal court was called *diwan-i-insha*; it was held under the charge of a central minister, variously known as the *dabir-i-mamalik*, *dabir-i-khas* or *amir munshi*. This department was the main source of communication between the royal court and the provincial and local governments, feudatory chieftains, military generals and the foreign powers. It drafted *firmans* of the sultan meant for the *grandees* of the empire and letters for the foreign rulers; and, in turn, received letters, reports and petitions of the latter addressed to the royal court or sultan. By the very nature of his duties, the *dabir-i-mamalik* was expected to be a highly educated man, an expert in Islamic jurisprudence and diplomacy. He acted as private secretary of the sultan and maintained perfect secrecy about all that transpired in his department. He utilised the services of scholars in various languages who drafted the letters, and employed an army of

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calligraphists and *dabirs* (clerks) who prepared the copies of the correspondence; it was because, in the absence of the modern printing facilities, the *firmans*, once prepared and approved by the sultan, had to be copied out for despatch to a number of dignitaries at a time. The *dabir-i-mamalik* displayed diplomatic skill in communicating the sentiments of the sultan to his important officers and foreign rulers and seems to have been 'responsible for keeping the pemire intact by its diplomatic manoeuvres'.[21]

The *diwan-i-risalat* constituted the fourth pillar of the imperial administration of the sultanate. There is some difference of opinion among modern scholars regarding the exact functions performed by this ministry; may be, different types of functions were entrusted to it during the reign of various ruling dynasties. Under the period of the 'slave dynasty', the head of this department was *sadr-us-sadur* who was primarily a minister for ecclesiastical affairs; he managed the religious endowments and disbursed grants and stipends to the *ulema*, *shaikhs* and other holy men. In his capacity as *rasul* of the sultan, he also received appeals and complaints from the public and redressed their grievances. It so appears that, at occasions, he was also called upon to receive ambassadors and envoys from the foreign rulers and introduce them to the sultan. During the reign of Alauddin Khalji, this department was taken out of the hand of the *sadr* and either renamed or replaced by another department, called the *diwan i riyasat*. Its primary function was to implement the economic regulations issued by the sultan and control the markets and prices. After the death of Alauddin Khalji, the *diwan i riyasat* lost its importance and the office of the *sadr us sadur*—the chief executive of the ecclesiastical affairs, assumed a premier role once again. The *diwan-i-qaza* was held by *qazi-ul-qazat* or *qazi-i-mamalik*; he was the chief qazi (justice of peace) as well as incharge of the judicial organisation of the state. Usually the offices of the *sadr* and the chief *qazi* were combined in a single person.

Other Imperial Officers

There were a number of royal departments and services which did not fall within the control of the above-mentioned central ministries; their officers were under the direct supervision of the sultan and some of them wielded great influence upon the sovereign and the royal court. *Barid-i-mamalik* was head of the information and intelligence department. *Vakil-i-dar* was incharge of the royal household and can better be called the Lord High Steward. *Amir-i-barbak* was superintendent of the royal court who assigned places to the nobility in accordance with their rank and status and maintained the dignity of the court. *Amir-i-hajib* kept an eye on all the visitors

21. U.N. Day, *The Government of the Sultanate*, op. cit., p. 76.

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to the court and presented them to the sultan in accordance with the court etiquette. *Amir-i-majlis* arranged the meetings of the royal assembly, special celebrations and feasts. The personal body-guards of the sultan were called *jandars* whose officers in charge was known as *sar-i-jandar*. *Amir-i-shikar* organised the royal hunts and constituted an important part of the royal entourage. The *kotwal* and the *qazi* of the metropolis were treated among the important imperial officers of the state. The chief queen, usually styled *malika-i-jahan*, or the queen mother, often called the *makhduma-i-jahan* or *khudawanda-i-jahan*, wielded great socio-political influence on the royal household. The importance of these dignitaries fluctuated from time to time and depended upon a particular situation or the personal whims, tastes and requirements of the various sultans. All the ministers, including the *wazir*, and other high officers were mere creatures of the sultan; they held office at his pleasure.

4: Provincial and Local Governments

The provincial government of the sultanate was not so well developed as that of the imperial mughals. Akbar was, in fact, the founder of the *subas* or the Indian provinces as we understand them today; it was he who created a uniform system of provincial government throughout his empire. The territories of the sultanate could be broadly divided into two parts—the *khalsa* or the land held under the direct administrative control of the central government, and the *jagirs*; the latter comprised the land under the autonomous control of the tributary hindu chieftains and the *iqtas*, or the rent free estates held by the muslim nobility in lieu of state service. The *khalsa* could be further split up into two categories from the point of view of administrative control. The first category comprised the northwestern region, inclusive of the provinces of Lahore and Multan, the Doab and the Gangetic valley upto the borders of Bihar and Bengal. The provincial governors of this region, usually called *walis* or *muqtas*, were under the firm control of the imperial government under normal circumstances. The second part of the *khalsa* included the distant provinces of Gujarat, Malwa, Bihar, Bengal and those of the Deccan under the tughluqs. Their governors enjoyed sufficient autonomy in their internal administration, maintained huge armies and were usually very influential men. Some of them inherited their governorships and received the titles of *naib sultans*, viz., the deputies of the sultan in their own respective regions. The hold of the imperial government over them was not always very strong.

The provincial government was an exact replica of the central government. The *wali* or governor acted as deputy of the sultan in his province and was directly responsible to the sultan. Being the chief executive of the province, he was responsible for the defence of his charge and the maintenance of law and order therein.

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He was commander of the provincial army. He held a small court but ordinarily was not authorised to use the canopy or the other royal insignia. The other provincial dignitaries were the *wazir* or *vakil*, *ariz*, *sadr* and the *qazi*. They were appointed sometimes by the central government but very often by the governor with the approval of the sultan; their functions corresponded to their counterparts in Delhi. None of them claimed equality of status with the governor; rather they had to act in subordination to the latter. In some provinces, the sultan appointed an imperial officer called *sahib i diwan* on the recommendation of the prime minister; he controlled the provincial revenues and exercised a sort of check on the powers and activities of the governor.

The local administrative units of the provincial government of the sultanate were very vague and undefined. The district or tehsil-level administration as it took its form during the reign of Sher Shah Sur was a far cry *albeit* we have the evidence to show that some of the provinces were divided into *shiqs* or districts which were governed by the *shiqdars*. Each *shiq* comprised a few *parganas* whose number was not fixed. Wherever this division existed, the *shiqdar* acted as the chief executive of the district who maintained law and order within his territorial jurisdiction with the help of a small locally recruited militia or army. He suppressed the refractory *khuts*, *muqaddams* and the *zamindars* and helped the *amil* in the collection of land revenue and other taxes. The *pargana* or *qasba* was an aggregate of villages, numbering about one hundred (a *sadi*) according to Ibn Battuta. The government officials of a *pargana*, after the *shiqdar* were an *amil*, *mushrif*, *khazandar* and *qazi*. The *amil* collected revenues, the *mushrif* kept the accounts, and *khazandar* safeguarded the treasury. The *qazi* decided the civil suits while *shiqdar* dealt with the criminal justice. The police chief of the town, called *kotwal*, acted in subordination to the *shiqdar*, or in his absence, to the governor direct. The military officers in charge of the fort along with their adjoining territories, were called *faujdars*. At the lowest ladder stood the villages which were governed by their local *panchayats*. These were mostly the self-supporting, self-dependent administrative units which constituted the backbone of the Indian polity even during the early medieval period.

5: Fiscal Policy of the Sultanate

The fiscal policy of the sultanate was based on the theory of taxation as propounded by the Hanafi school of thought among the muslim jurists. It prescribed the levy of four kinds of taxes—*zakat*, *kharaj*, *khams*, and *jaziya*. The *zakat* was a religious tax, paid by the muslims 'as an act of piety' for the benefit and welfare of their co-religionists; it was charged at the rate of 2.5 per cent of the

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actual income or property. The *kharaj* was the land revenue which varied from 10 to 50 per cent of the agricultural produce and was payable in cash or kind. The tributary hindu chiefs also paid tribute or *kharaj* in lump sum. The *khams* constituted the state's share of the booty acquired by the soldiers in the course of war. The Islamic law required the soldiers to surrender one-fifth of the spoils to the sovereign whereas powerful monarchs demanded much more; so much so that Alauddin Khalji wanted his soldiers to hand over four-fifths of it to the state exchequer. As stated elsewhere in this study, the *jaziya* was a poll tax charged from the hindus in their capacity as *zimmis*; they were denied the right of full-fledged citizenship of the state. *Jaziya* was collected from all able-bodied grown-up males. The hindu population was divided into three grades on the basis of their economic standing; the richest among them paid 48 *dirhams*, the second grade 24 *dirhams*, and the third 12 *dirhams per annum*. The nature of the tax, the mode of its collection and its implications on the hindu-muslim relations have long been the subject of historical analysis and detailed treatment by modern scholars, hence it is not deemed necessary to say much about these aspects in this study.

In spite of the extensive reforms carried out in the land revenue system by Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad bin Tughluq, the sultans of Delhi failed to develop a progressive system of land revenue based on the measurement of land and assessment of the state demand in proportion to the actual produce. The agrarian reforms of Alauddin Khalji and the revolutionary changes introduced in the fiscal policy by him and Muhammad bin Tughluq fizzled out in the hands of their less imaginative and shortsighted successors. Firoze Tughluq revived the *jagir* system with a vengeance, the evil effects of which have already been discussed elsewhere in this study.

The Iqta System

The *iqtadari* was a unique type of land distribution system evolved during the sultanate period, the parallel of which is hard to find elsewhere in the history of India; the feudal estates of the rajput era and the *jagirdari* system of the mughals were quite distinct from it. It was a system of the allotment of vast tracts of land, called *iqtas*, among the military nobles. As we know, the conquest of the country by the turks is a paradox of Indian history. A handful of the turkish nobles, assisted by thousands (but not *lakhs*) of the adventurers, apparently strangers to the land and its people, scored a military victory and set up as rulers. The number of the victors was very small, rather insignificant, as compared with the teeming millions who had been subjugated by them. The conquerors established their military hold over important towns and fortifications *albeit* the vast land mass of the countryside with the bulk of the Indian population was yet to be explored and conquered. In order to facilitate this task, the sultans parcelled out their vague and

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undefined dominions into *iqtas* and distributed these among their ambitious and enterprising nobles. The latter, called the *iqtadars* or *muqtas*, were instructed to carry on aggressive campaigns against the powerful and refractory hindu chiefs in their region and bring them under effective subjugation. The *iqta* was a half-conquered and poorly administered territory over which the *assignee* was expected to establish a firm hold, and introduce civil administration there as he thought fit or feasible. The *iqtadar* recruited his own army which was made self-supporting by utilising the resources of his possessions. He held the *iqta* almost as a rent-free grant in lieu of the state service. He paid to the sovereign a specified amount of *kharaj* or offered presents in cash or kind, including gold, silver, horses, elephants or other precious articles every year and rendered military service to the state when needed.

The *iqtadars* were not ordinary *jagirdars* or holders of rent-free assignments; they made personal contribution towards the expansion and consolidation of the turkish rule in India in the thirteenth century. Most of them were self-made men who held the *iqtas* as their personal estates which were passed on to their descendants in heritage. The emergence of hereditary *iqtadars* or feudal lords among the turkish nobility laid the foundations of their rule very deep in the Indian soil. Balban failed to eradicate the hereditary *iqtadars*. Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad bin Tughluq struck a serious blow to them by the abolition of the *jagirdari* system. They retained the *iqtas* as administrative units but changed the character of their holders. They resumed the hereditary *iqtas* which were entrusted to civil-cum-military servants who acted somewhat like district officers under the overall supervision of the regional or provincial governors. As the provincial government of the sultanate was not well-developed, some of the *iqtadars* were under the direct control of the imperial government and were treated as provincial governors for all intents and purposes. Politically important or prosperous *iqtas* were given to the princes of the royal blood as their personal estates. The evil of hereditary *iqtadars* was revived by the successors of Alauddin Khalji and subsequently made universal by Firoze Tughluq who parcelled out whole of his kingdom into *iqtas* or fiefs which were distributed among the nobles as rent-free assignments. Theoretically, the *iqtadars* were under obligation to remit their surplus revenues to the state treasury and get their accounts ch cked by the royal auditors of the *diwan i wizarat*. Of course, the sultan granted villages, agricultural lands or residential places as rent-free grants to scholars, saints and others within an *iqta* which were excluded from the jurisdiction of the *iqtadars*. The latter, in turn, granted free assignments to their relations, subordinates and brilliant lieutenants thus strengthening and perpetuating the feudal element in the administrative hierarchy of the sultanate.

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6: The Judiciary

The sultans transplanted foreign law and legal institutions in India which did not take deep roots during the early medieval period. They implemented *shariat* or the Islamic law of crime and punishment, the main sources of which were the *Quran*, the *Hadis*, and the *Ijma*. The holy scripture contained the 'divine revelations', the *Hadis* comprised the traditions and precepts of the Prophet in matters of law and religion, while the *Ijma* (consensus of opinion) referred to the legal decisions taken by the muslim jurists (*mujtahids*) on the authority and by the interpretation of the first two sources. As regards the muslims, the application of the Islamic law to them was treated as 'personal' and indispensable while the hindus were exempt from the application of the religious part of the law. The latter were governed by their own traditions, customs and the personal law which was interpreted with the aid of learned *pandits* in their own *panchayats*, *albeit* a hindu was subjected to the Islamic law when the rival party in dispute happened to be a muslim or the state.

The judicial system of the sultanate was not very complex. The ecclesiastical cases were separated from the civil and criminal suits. The sultan as the fountain of justice usually aspired to earn reputation as the just monarch; his *durbar* constituted the highest civil and criminal court of justice which took up original as well as appellate cases. The sultan personally heard the disputes and administered justice with the assistance of *muftis* who interpreted the law for him. Below the sultan, there was the court of *qazi-ul-guzat* or the chief justice of the empire who was appointed by the sultan and held office at his pleasure. The chief *qazi* was incharge of the main judicial organisation of the state. He appointed the provincial *qazis*, issued rules and regulations for the proper functioning of the provincial and local courts and exercised disciplinary control over the judicial services. Almost every important town had a *qazi's* court. *Muhtasib*, the censor of public morals, acted as police-cum-judge in the observance of the canon law by the muslims. The provincial governors, *iqtadars* and other executive officers possessed some judicial powers also; even the *faujdars* and *kotwals* were authorised to settle petty criminal cases and inflict punishments on the defaulters. Ordinarily, the high officers did not discriminate between the exercise of their executive and judicial functions. The *amils* and other revenue officials decided the revenue disputes. The village *panchayats* enjoyed the sanction of the state to administer justice according to the local tradition, customs and the personal law of the populace. The penal code was severe; physical torture and capital punishment constituted an essential part of it. Deterrent punishments were inflicted on the rebels and enemies of the state.

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7: The Ruling Elite

The Nobility

The sultanate was based on the active support and cooperation of the nobility, referred to as the *ahl i shamshir* or *ahl i saif*—'the men of the sword'. They constituted the backbone of the sultanate and formed a part and parcel of the sovereign power. The nobles commanded the armies and contributed towards the establishment and expansion of the sultanate. They supplied ministers, provincial governors, *iqtadars* and other high executive officers, from among them and exercised great influence on the state policies. The crown was not beyond the reach of a capable and ambitious noble. The nature, character and the role of the turkish nobility has been discussed in detail in the preceding pages of this study. Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad bin Tughluq established their despotic rule by curtailing the powers of the nobility; the latter, however, reasserted themselves during the reigns of the weak sultans and set up either as king-makers or *de facto* rulers of the territories under their control. The character and role of the turbulent afghan nobility who brought into existence the elective tribal monarchy of the Lodhis has also been discussed in sufficient detail in chapter 8 of this study. The disaffected and demoralised nobility brought about the fall of the sultanate.

The Ulema (or Ulama)

After the nobles, the *ulema* (*ahl i qalam*)—the muslim intellectuals and theologians exercised a great influence on the policies and functions of the state; together with the nobility they constitued the first two estates of the muslim society, styled as the *umara*. They interpreted the Islamic law and regarded themselves as the spiritual guardians of the Islamic state. They manned the judicial and ecclesiastical services and held an exclusive control over the mosques, religious establishments and educational institutions. They enjoyed respect and prestige among the muslim massess and, because of their popular appeal, demanded attention of the sultan and the nobility alike. The sultan always felt obliged to treat them with due deference; even the most powerful sultan Alauddin Khalji paid them lip-service and kept them in good humour by extending liberal state patronage. Muhammad bin Tughluq had to pay heavily when he incurred the displeasure of the *ulema* as a class. Under the weak or orthodox sultans, the *ulema* asserted their influence in state politics. The *sadr-us-sadur* and *qazi-ul-quzat* were usually their high priests.

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8: Military Organisation

The sultanate was military dictatorship; it owed its genesis to the military victory of the turks over the Indian rulers in the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries, and its strengh and stability depended primarily on its strong and efficient army. The military organisation of the turks was based on turkish and mongol models. The sultan and all the *grandees* of the sultanate were basically militarymen whose titles denoted social status by way of a military gradation. According to Chengiz Khan's classification of his nobility, a *khan* commanded 10,000 horse, a *mali* 1,000 and an *amir* 100. During the sultanate period, the socio-political gradation of the imperial officers, collectively known as the *umara* (plural of the term *amir*) remained the same although the exact numerical strength of the soldiery commanded by them was seldom adhered to.

The army of the turks was primarily composed of the cavalry and infantry; a horseman, however, occupied a place of pride in it. The war elephants were in great demand; they were put to a better use by the turks against their Indian foes. Besides their actual use in the war, the turks also employed them as beasts of burden for the quick transport of armament and the foot soldiers on the war front. The soldiers used bows and arrows, spears, swords, battle axes and daggers as the offensive weapons of war while their defensive weapons included the shields, mails of steel and protective headgears. The horseman and his horse were both well-protected; the animal was provided with iron trappings so as to cover the whole of its body and a thick iron plate for the protection of its head. The turkish horsemen were excellent archers who could aim at their targets with precision while moving at full speed on their horseback. The forts were a prized possession of the turks; infantry was of great use to them in laying siege to the forts. The catapults and other mechanical means were employed for hurling big stones and combustible material on the besiegers and for setting fire to the enemy's camps.

The army organisation of the sultans was based on feudal principles which carried all the inherent defects of the system with it. Alauddin raised a strong and well-equipped standing army, paid in cash by the state, but his successors failed to retain the standard and efficiency of the royal troops as developed by him. Some failures of the feudal organisation of army during the reign of Firoze Tughluq have already been elaborated in this study. He substituted the system of cash payments by the grant

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of *jagirs* or rent-free assignments to the soldiery and introduced hereditary and life-long military service. The branding of the horses, taking of the descriptive rolls of the soldiers and annual review of troops by the sultan fell into disuse. Firoze Tughluq was personally responsible for the decay and deterioration of the once mighty and 'invincible' army of the sultanate.

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12

Architectural Monuments of the Sultans

Building Activity of the Sultans—Its Rationale

The sultans of Delhi are known to have been great builders. They founded many new towns throughout their dominions which became flourishing centres of trade and commerce before long. They built royal palaces, forts, public buildings, mosques, *madrasas*, *dargahs* (monasteries), *serais* and mausoleums. Most of the buildings constructed by them have either disappeared altogether or lie in ruins *albeit* a large number of beautiful mosques and tombs built by the sultans or during their age have survived the wear and tear of time and constitute the living monuments of the sultanate period uptil this day. Of course, as regards the socio-cultural advancement of early medieval period, the sultans of Delhi made the greatest contribution in the domain of architecture. Their hectic building activity gave rise to what is usually styled as the Indo-Muslim architecture. The spirit of synthesis between the two cultural streams, which manifested itself in various spheres was best expressed in the field of architecture; it was here that the blending of the two architectural styles—one indigenous and the other foreign produced marvellous results almost instantaneously.

The scholars of ancient Indian history are aware that this country has had a very strong and well-developed architectural tradition going back to the pre-Christian era. The turko-afghan conquerors occupied the principal Indian towns which became the hubs of their political activity at the central, provincial and local levels. These were flourishing urban habitats of the hindus, adorned with magnificent buildings and public monuments *albeit* the sultans and their ruling *elite* were eager to maintain their separate identity as victors; therefore, they usually held themselves aloof from the residential quarters of the hindus.[1] To some extent, it was necessitated for reasons of their personal security as well. Moreover, they had a living style of their own and had brought with them 'the Islamic tradition' of architecture which was quite distinct from that of the

1. For further details refer to Volume III of this study.

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ancient Indian art and architecture. There is a force in the arguments advanced by a modern scholar that 'the muslims had their own approach to the art of building both in form and spirit and in methods and materials of construction'.[2] The Islamic architectural tradition was conditioned by the concepts and practical needs of their religion and the geophysical background of the central Asian countries from which they had come. Accordingly, they initiated a vigorous architectural activity as a matter of necessity and taste and raised new townships, very often in close proximity to the ancient Indian towns, throughout the sultanate, for their official and personal residential purposes. The muslim rulers adopted Delhi as their capital where they constructed as many as seven new townships or building complexes in the neighbourhood of the old town during the period of their rule. Their provincial governors and local officers did likewise at their places of residence and administrative control. In the humble opinion of the author, their building activity was akin to 'the model town movement' which gained momentum in India after the dawn of independence, particularly, during the fifties of the present century, before it was overtaken by the subsequent mad rush for modernisation and unwieldy expansion of our towns and cities.

The Islamic Architecture so-called

The central Asian tradition of architecture brought by the sultans to India is sometimes styled as 'the Islamic architecture' which is rather a misnomer. Arabia, where Islam took its birth, had no architectural traditions. The only structure of architectural interest, prevalent in that land, was 'the caravan roofless serai' built in a rectangular form with a gate and guard's post and small chambers, protected by strong peripheral walls. Of course, it left a distinct mark on the infant Islamic culture; the mosque is a replica of this *caravan serai*, with the additional provision of a prayer niche in the wall, situated opposite to the main gate.[3] With the spread of Islam in the various countries of central Asia, north Africa, and eastern Europe, their architects readily adopted the salient features of the architectural styles of these countries, resulting in the development of a composite Islamic architecture on which the Persian influence was predominant. According to an observation, 'the arabs had no arts of their own' and that the so-called 'Islamic art' was nothing but 'an adaptation to the requirements of their religion of indigenous elements, borrowed from the various nations which they overcame'.[4] Modern researches have laid bare the fact that ancient India had made, in

2. Ziyauddin A. Desai, *Indo-Islamic Architecture*, Delhi, 1970, p. 1.
3. Refer to H. Cousens, *A Short Account of Early Muslim Architecture*; Pelican, 1958; & A. Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Islamic Period)*; Bombay, 1944.
4. For details refer to H G. Rawlinson, *India--A Short Cultural History*, ed. by C.G. Seligman, London, 1937.

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times immemorial, a substantial contribution towards the development of art and architecture in the countries of central Asia, including Persia particularly. Therefore, the so-called 'Islamic architecture' brought by the sultans to Delhi had itself a considerable Indian share. No hair-splitting between the Indian and the Persian strains therein would help in clinching the issue when the relationships between the two countries can be traced back to the prehistoric times.[5]

Synthesis Between the Indigenous and 'Islamic' Traditions

The turko-afghan rulers of India observed no reservations in adopting the Indian forms and styles of architecture in spite of all the prejudices that they initially bore against the vanquished infidels; and their culture. Some of the factors responsible for the instant blending of the two architectural traditions were simply beyond their control. Being military adventurers, they did not bring any craftsmen or architectural experts with them to India. They had perforce to employ the Indian architects, masons, stone-cutters and other workers for the construction of their buildings. The Indian workers, with a rich experience of the indigenous styles, forms and methods of construction, introduced consciously or unconsciously, architectural designs and decorative details unknown to the muslims before. Secondly, the turkish rulers made extensive use of the rich architectural material obtained by the destruction and demolition of the hindu temples and other public buildings. Very often they took forced occupation of the magnificent hindu and jain temples and educational institutions and converted them into mosques by simply demolishing their roofs and idolatrous features and erecting domes and minarets in their place. As a consequence, the Indian concepts and forms of architecture were bound to have a deep imprint on the buildings of the sultans.

Difference Between Indigenous and 'Islamic' Architecture

Broadly speaking, the indigenous architecture was based on the general principle of 'beam and bracket' which enabled the construction of vast and sprawling building complexes of almost any dimensions. It was made possible by the erection of narrow columns and pillars, long beams and corbel brackets to support the flat roofs to which any number of storeys could be added. In technical language, this style is called *trabeate* which implies the use of rows of pillars and long beams, instead of arches and vaults, to

5. "The forefathers of the Aryans of Iran and India belonged to the same branch of the great Aryan people so that the two groups were related by common blood and close kinship in language, religion and culture."— Refer to D.C. Sircar, *Iranians and Greeks in Ancient Punjab*, Sitaram Kohli Memorial Lectures, delivered at the Punjabi University, Patiala, 1972.

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span the spaces. Behind this most scientific and highly developed architectural principle lay the centuries of building experience and architectural heritage of the Indians which manifested itself in various art styles, shades and hues.[6] On the other hand, 'the Islamic style' was *arcuate* (bent like a bow or arched) which employed arches and vaults to bridge the spaces and envisaged the construction of graceful domes in place of flat roofs; obviously, such an art style was not very helpful in the construction of spacious palaces or multi-storey building structures. This was the basic difference between the two art styles variously termed as 'Indian' and 'Islamic' or 'hindu' and 'muslim' arts respectively; many other architectural differences between the two traditions formed but a corollary to it.

Among the other distinguishing features of the two art styles may be mentioned the 'solidarity and grace' or 'strength and beauty' of the Indian architecture; these two virtues, which were 'not to be found in the same measure' in any other architectural style of the world, were readily adopted by the sultans of Delhi in their building activities.[7] The most highly developed temple architecture marked by its lofty *shikhars* and infinite richness and variety of sculptural forms was, of course, repulsive to the muslim mind. Both the art styles were decorative in their own way *albeit* their concepts of decoration were different. The 'hindu style' of ornamentation, though very rich in character, was 'expressive of natural, particularly human forms'. On the other hand, 'the decoration of the muslims, under religious injunctions, avoided representation of living beings and took the form of flat surface ornament depicting arabesque or geometrical and floral patterns, inscriptions in various styles of writing, gilding and painting', etc. According to an art critic,

> "The Islamic architecture of India is an interesting story of these two seemingly opposite styles mingling with each other with varying degrees in different parts of the country at different periods of time, depending upon climatic conditions, type and availability of material and similar other factors. It is for this reason that the features of Indian style are found freely employed in the muslim monuments of India. The qualities of strength and grace, typical of the hindu monuments, were

6. For details refer to Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Buddhist and Hindu)*, 2nd ed., Bombay, 1949; A. Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*; London, 1921; and J. Burgess, *Ancient Monuments, Temples and Sculptures of India*, 2 vols; London, 1897.
7. Refer to H. Cousens, *A Short Account of Early Muslim Architecture*, Pelican, 1958; also, E.B. Havell, *Indian Architecture—Its Psychology, Structure and History From the first Muhammedan Invasion to the Present Day*, London, 1913.

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borrowed by the muslims, who also did not infrequently use the trabeate system."[8]

Three Phases of Development

The growth and development of 'the Indo-Islamic architecture' during the sultanate period took place in three phases. During the first phase were erected the buildings at Lahore, Ajmer and Delhi by the Slave and the Khalji monarchs; the construction of buildings by the tughluqs constitutes the second phase, quite distinct and advanced from the earlier one. The construction of architectural monuments by the sultans of Delhi suffered a setback after the downfall of the tughluq dynasty; *albeit*, by this time, the architectural activities had shifted to the provincial and regional capitals of the sultanate whose governors, particularly after declaring their independence, beautified their capitals by the erection of magnificent palaces, mosques and other public monuments. This marked the third phase of development of architecture during the period under review.

The First Phase: Architectural Monuments of the Slave and Khalji Sultans

Qutubuddin Aibek started with the construction of mosques as symbols of Islamic victory over the *infidel* lands. The mosques of *Quwat-ul-Islam* at Delhi and *Adhai din ka Jhompra* at Ajmer were built by him out of the material of demolished hindu temples during the period of his viceroyalty. The construction of the former was undertaken by him immediately after the fall of Prithvi Raj Chauhan in the second battle of Tarain. It was raised on the plinth of a hindu temple and it contains a spacious hall, covered with a flat roof, supported by rows of pillars; the whole structure is a crude adaptation of the once magnificent hindu palace of worship to which 'an Islamic touch' has been provided by 'an arched screen', containing calligraphic reproduction of the Quranic text, in front of the prayer-chamber. Similarly, the *masjid* at Ajmer was erected on the ruins of a Sanskrit college. It was occupied by the marathas on the decline of the mughal empire; it is said that they celebrated a festival there which lasted two days and a half; hence the name *Adhai din ka Jhompra*. The building complex raised by Qutubuddin Aibek round about the *Qila i Raj Pithaura* (viz; the fort of Prithvi Raj Chauhan) was the first of 'the seven cities of Delhi' built by the muslim rulers.[9] Aibek started the construction of the world-famous *Qutub Minar* in 1199 in the memory of a *sufi* saint Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki[10]; it was completed by Altutmish.

8. Ziyauddin A. Desai, *Indo-Islamic Architecture*; *loc. cit.*
9. Gordon Hearson, *The Seven Cities of Delhi—A Description and History*, Thacker & Spink, Calcutta & Simla, 1928.
10. Popularly known as Qutub Shah or *Uch ka Pir* (Uch or Ush being a place situated near Baghdad).

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Intended originally to be a part of the *masjid* from where the *muezzin* could issue a call to 'the faithful' for prayer, it, ultimately, emerged as a tower of victory 'to cast the shadow of God over the east and the west' as per an inscription carved on its surface. Made up of red sandstone, with the artistic grafting of white marble in its higher reaches, the Qutub Minar is a masterpiece of the Indo-Islamic technology and art; it was designed by the muslim architects but built by the hindu craftsmen. One of the highest and perhaps the most beautiful stone-towers, it is considered to be one of 'the sevn wonders of the world'. Originally it comprised four storeys and was 225 feet in height with a circumference of 150 feet at the base, gradually tapering in its ascent. The fourth storey of the Minar was damaged by lightning and got repaired subsequently by Firoze Tughluq who replaced it by two smaller ones, thus raising the height of the tower to 240 feet. A circular stairway takes the visitors to the top of the tower while each of its five storeys is surmounted by a 'projecting gallery, encircling the tower; these balconies are supported by miniature arches, decorated with combwork of exquisite beauty'.

The tomb of Altutmish, built by the sultan during his lifetime near the *Quwatul Islam* mosque, is a beautiful monument of the Persian art. It contains a single chamber, made up of red sandstone with an outer layer of grey granite. It has arched entrances on three sides and a *mehrab*, flanked by two small arched entrances on the fourth side. An entirely different type of tomb was built by Altutmish on the grave of his son Nasiruddin Mahmud; it is called the *Sultan Garhi* and is situated in Malkapur at a distance of about three miles from the Qutub Minar. Its exterior is made of grey granite stone and white marble while its inner base is octagonal in form and the roof is supported by beautiful pillars with decorative capitals and arches of the hindu architectural designs. Balban's tomb, situated to the southeast of *Qila i Rai Pithaura* is a square chamber, covered by a dome which has doorways on all sides. It is also furnished with the arches of the hindu style.

Alauddin Khalji took keen interest in the building activities. He prepared an elaborate plan for the extension of the architectural complex in the Qutub area. *Alai Darwaza*, 'a tresure-gem of Islamic architecture' was completed in 1311; it served as an entrance to the imperial campus. Its building consists of square hall, covered by a dome, with arched doorways on each of its four sides. It is made of red sandstone, picked out by white marble strips and enriched by calligraphic inscriptions and decorative carvings. Alauddin built a new fort and the imperial township of *Siri*—the second of 'the seven cities of Delhi'. It was situated to the north of the Qutub complex and its foundation was laid in 1303. Here the sultan built a magnificent palace, *Mahal Hazar Satun*—'the palace of thousand pillars'. The entire town now lies in ruins and is located by the bare outlines of an erstwhile extensive tank, called the *Hauz i Khas*. Alauddin had also built the *Jamait Khana* mosque,

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wholly in conformity with the muslim ideas', within the enclosure of Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya's shrine; it was extended during the tughluq period.

The Second Phase: Buildings of the Tughluq Period

The early sultans displayed their vanity and splendour as conquerors of the land by spending lavishly on the construction of public buildings which were marked by elaborate ornamentation and decorative features of heterogeneous character. The tughluq monarchs were more realistic in handling this work. They constructed beautiful buildings to provide more comfort and luxury to their dwellers at much less cost. Their buildings, though 'less elegant and artistic' in an abstract sense, were marked by simplicity and austerity. Ghiasuddin Tughluq founded 'the third city of Delhi', named Tughluqabad, to the east of the Qutub complex. It was a sort of fortified township built on a hill top and protected by its own double or triple defensive walls. Quadrangular in shape, measuring about 2,000 metres on each side, and overlooking the entire Yamuna belt because of its elevation from the ground level, the township of Tughluqabad was provided with a magnificent royal palace and numerous other public buildings all of which now lie in ruins. It has rightly been said that 'few strongholds of antiquity look more imposing in their ruins than the town of Tughluqabad'. Its sharply sloping walls, made of huge irregualr stones and having colossal circular bastions at close intervals, heavy battlements and a series of loopholes, create an impression of great strength and solidarity. 'Within its walls may now be seen ruined streets and buildings and the traces of the royal palace once roofed with gilded tiles', and 'the golden bricks which, when the sun rose, shone so dazzlingly that no one could gaze at it steadily'.[11] The soldier sultan built his own mausoleum beneath the walls of the city with which it was connected by a causeway. The tomb, which, unlike the town, has survived in a fairly preserved state, is made of red sandstone with inlays of marble, and has an irregular pentagonal base; it is surmounted by a huge dome of marble, and the entire structure is enclosed by a battlemented sloping wall with a massive 'bastion at each corner', thus giving it the shape of a fortress.

The small fortress of Adilabad, situated in the neighbourhood of Tughluqabad, was constructed by Muhammad bin Tughluq. He founded *Jahanpanah*—'the fourth city of Delhi' in between and by linking the first and the second cities by walls of huge thickness. The entire structure now lies in ruins with the exception of *Sathpalah Band* and the *Bijai Mandal*. The sultan must have made a great contribution towards the construction of public buildings at Daulatabad in the Deccan which was made the imperial capital by

11. Ibn Batuta, *Kitab ur Rehla*; Eng. trs. by A. Mahdi Husain, entitled, *The Rehla of Ibn Battuta*, Baroda, 1953.

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him for a shortwhile; most of his buildings have, however, disappeared because of the poor building material used in their construction. Firoze Tughluq was a builder *par excellence* who made a rich contribution towards the construction of public works, including the new towns, palaces, mosques, tombs, water reservoirs, *caravan serais*, bridges, canals, public baths, *madrasas*, shrines, charity houses, gardens and what not. He founded the cities of Fatehabad, Hissar Firoza (modern Hissar in Haryana) and Jaunpur. He built 'the fifth city of Delhi', called Firozabad, which was situated to the north of *Siri*. Therein he raised three palaces, including the one palace-fort, now called Kotla Firoze Shah, nine mosques and many public buildings to accommodate the courtiers and secretarial offices.

Third Phase: Countrywide Expansion of Indo-Islamic Architecture

The invasion of Amir Timur in 1398-99 gave a serious setback to the socio-cultural advancement of northern India, in general, and the architectural activities of the sultans of Delhi, in particular. He descended upon the country as 'a scourge of God' and wrought untold miseries upon its people. The whole of northwestern region, including Delhi and a part of the Doab, was trampled under feet by the turkish hordes and robbed of its incalculable wealth; dozens of big towns were sacked and their magnificent buildings razed to the ground. Delhi, once the metropolis of an extensive muslim empire in the subcontinent and the hub of Islamic culture and civilisation of the east of Baghdad, lay in ruins, with its debris soaked in the blood of its unfortunate citizens.[12] The Sayyads and the Lodhis, had neither the time nor resources to attend to the architectural activities. Nevertheless, Khizr Khan, the founder of the Sayyad dynasty, laid the foundation of a new township, called Khizrabad, and his successor Mubarak Shah made a half-hearted attempt to raise yet another building complex, known after him as Mubarakabad, which is now located by the tomb of the founder. The fifteenth century is marked by the appearance of numerous tombs of artistic beauty and strength, constructed by the Sayyad and the Lodhi sultans as well as their nobility which dot the present metropolis of Delhi and constitute attractive visiting spots for the sightseers. These include, among others, the tombs of Sikander Lodhi, *Bare Khan*, *Chhote Khan*, *Bara Gumbad*, *Shish Gumbad*, *Dadi ka Gumbad*, *Poli ka Gumbad*, and *Moth ki Masjid*.

The Indo-Islamic architectural activity had become almost universal throughout the length and breadth of the empire during the tughluq period. With the decline and disintegration of the sultanate, the architectural activities were also decentralised and

12. For details refer to Volume III of this study.

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shifted to the provincial capitals and the regional states which emerged on its ruins. It resulted in the diversification of the Indo-Islamic architecture, giving birth to a number of art styles with the manifestation of new features, distinct from those of the traditional Indo-Islamic architecture as had been patronised by the sultans of Delhi in the thirteenth and the first half of the fourteenth centuries. Among others, the centres of local or regional architectural styles included those of Bengal, Jaunpur, Malwa, Gujarat, Punjab and the Bahmani kingdom of the south whose rulers extended liberal patronage to art and architecture. Throughout this period, the hindu states including those of Mewar, Marwar and Vijayanagar, preserved and extended the ancient Indian architectural styles and forms with equally great enthusiasm.

Bengal had a strong local tradition of art and architecture in ancient times; accordingly, the muslim rulers of the province, whether independent or subordinate to the sultans of Delhi, became responsible for the emergence of remarkably original Bengali style of Indo-Islamic architecture soon after the establishment of their foothold there. It retained many popular hindu traditions 'in the structural as well as decorative fields' even in the construction of purely Islamic art forms like the *masjids* and tombs.[13] The muslim architects adopted the hindu temple style of curvilinear cornices,[14] dwarf square pillars and the carved designs, like lotus, for decoration. Paucity of stone necessitated the use of kiln-burnt bricks as the chief building material as ever before although the use of stone, where available, was also not neglected by them. The tomb and a mosque of Zafar Khan Ghazi at Tribeni (district Hooghly), which constituted the earliest architectural monument of the Indo-Islamic style in Bengal, now lie in partial ruins; these had been constructed almost exclusively from material of the hindu buildings. The *Adina Masjid*, constructed by Sikander Shah (1359-83) at Pandua (West Bengal), was said to be 'as big as the eighth century *Jam i Masjid* at Damascus', it had a vast central courtyard, measuring 397 feet by 159 feet. According to J.P. Guha, 'the central nave of its sanctuary which measured 70 feet by 34 feet, with its pointed archway, 50 feet high and 33 feet wide, and trefoil arched *mihrab* at the western side, bearing hindu designs, all point to a work of rich imagination'.[15] The *Eklakhi* tomb of Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah (1415-31) at Pandua exhibits the true character of the Bengali style of Indo-Islamic architecture. The *Dakhili Darwaza* at Gaur (West Bengal) is an imposing gateway which has been built of bricks with terracotta surface decoration. Among other extant monuments of the later

13. Refer to J.P. Guha, *Introducing Indian Art*; Calcutta, 1963.
14. Popularly known as the *Bengali roof*, sloping downwards the ends in a slight curve on the pattern of the typical bamboo roofs of the hindu buildings, so designed for the speedy dispersal of water during the rainy season.
15. Guha, Introducing Indian Art, *op. cit.*

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Ilyas Shahi and subsequent rulers of Bengal (1442-1576) may be mentioned. *Tantipara, Chamkan Darasbari, Lotan, Bara Sona, Chhota Sona* and *Qadam Rasul* mosques at Gaur and *Bagha masjid* in the Rajashahi district of modern Bangladesh.

The town of *Jaunpur* was founded by sultan Firoze Tughluq on the bank of the Gomti during his return march from the second expedition of Bengal in 1359-60 in the memory of his cousin Jauna Khan (Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq). After the sack of Delhi by Amir Timur, the Tughluq governor of Jaunpur, named Malik Sarwar, set up as a *de facto* ruler and laid the foundation of what is known to history as the Sharqi dynasty of Jaunpur (1399-1500). Sultan Ibrahim Shah (1402-36), the greatest ruler of this dynasty, was a great patron of art, architecture, education and learning. He beautified his capital by the construction of magnificent public buildings, gardens and educational institutions, as a result of which Jaunpur became a great centre of Islamic culture and learning, and earned the title of the *Shiraz of India.* It developed a new style of Indo-Islamic architecture which showed a profuse and very refreshing blending of the hindu and muslim architectural traditions. The Sharqi architects made simultaneouse use of the arcuate and trabeate principles in their building structures, thus bringing about a very healthy synthesis between the two styles. The buildings of Jaunpur were noted for their beautiful arches and decorated vaults side by side with square pillars with bracket capitals, massive sloping walls and cloisters while its mosques were devoid of minarets of the traditional Islamic style. Among the extant monuments of the Sharqi dynasty may be mentioned the Atala Devi,[16] *Jhanjhiri, Khalis Mukhlis* and *Lal Darwaza*[17] mosques, all of which are eclipsed by the massive *Jami Masjid* built by Husain Shah Sharqi in about 1417 A.D. 'According to Fergusson's observation, the Jaunpur style could be distinguished by its use of pylon or gateway of almost Egyptian mass and outline.'[18]

The province of *Gujarat* has had a glorious tradition of indigenous architectural style long before the penetration of the muslim arms there during the rule of Alauddin Khalji in 1297. After the invasion of Amir Timur, its governor Zafar Khan, son of a local hindu convert, became independent of Delhi with the title of Sultan Muzaffar Shah in 1401. He and his successors continued to rule over Gujarat until its annexation by Akbar in 1572. The turkish governors and, later on, the sovereign muslim rulers of Gujarat thoroughly exploited the local architectural talent and resources for the construction of palaces, forts, mosques and public buildings,

16. built on the site of an earlier hindu temple dedicated to the worship of *Atala* goddess.
17. So called because of the colour of the main gate; it was built by Raj Bibi, a consort of sultan Mahmud Sharqi.
18. James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, 2nd revised edition by James Burgess & Spiers, 2 vols, London, 1910, II, pp. 34-44.

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thus giving birth to 'the most remarkable and the finest' among the provincial styles of Indo-Islamic architecture[19]; it carried the predominant influence of the Gujarati hindu traditions. Sultan Ahmad Shah (1411-42) laid the foundation of an entirely new capital city, named after him as Ahmadabad; it was adorned with magnificent buildings on which the hindu and muslim architects worked hand in glove with each other to produce marvellous results in the domain of a typically Gujarati art style. Among the extant monuments of this period mention may be made of the magnificent *Jama i Masjid* of Ahmadabad which has fifteen domes, each supported on eight columns and a hall of 260 lofty pillars with richly carved galleries. The facade of the mosque with its well-proportioned parts and wide cloisters on all the four sides of the open courtyard, make it 'one of the noblest edifices' in the whole world; 'with this mosque,' says Percy Brown, 'the medieval architecture reached the high water-mark of the mosque design in western India, if not in the entire country.'[20] A small but elegant tomb of Rani Sipri (Rani Sabrai; d. 1514 A.D.), with an attached lovely little mosque, has been adjudged, by far as the most beautiful monument of Ahmadabad. "East or West", writes Sir John Marshall, "it would be difficult to single out a building in which the parts are harmoniously blended or in which balance, symmetry and decorative rhythm combine to produce a more perfect effect. Its mosque is a small one, only 48 feet by 19.5 feet, but this smallness is an asset in its favour, since the delicate traceries and jewels—like carving of Gujarat, suggestive as they are of an almost feminine grace, show to less advantage in bigger and more virile structures."[21] With 'richly decorated stone-carving, low cupolas, high ornamental minarets and meticulous finishing', this queen among the architectural monuments, is the one 'which only a hindu queen could order and only hindu artist could carve;[22] it has justly been acclaimed by Fergusson as 'the most exquisite gem' of Ahmadabad.[23] Yet another production of 'rare architectural dignity' at Ahmadabad is Tin Darwaza or Triple Gateway; crowned by a well-balanced and richly decorated arch, it constituted a stately entrance to the royal building complex.

Malwa slipped out of the control of Delhi in 1398 under its erstwhile governor Dilawar Khan Ghori; his ruling house was transplanted by Mahmud Khalji in 1436. The muslim rulers of Malwa who had their capital first at Dhar and then at Mandu have also left behind quite a few monuments of Indo-Islamic architecture with a local strain. Of these, the *Jam i Masjid* of Mandu completed in 1454 A.D. is a beautiful edifice, which has been built on a raised

19. A. Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Islamic Period)*, Bombay, 1944, pp. 47-48; also E.B. Havell, *Indian Architecture*, London, 1913, pp. 51-63.
20. *ibid.*
21. John Marshall, "Monuments of Muslim India"—*Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, London, 1928.
22. H.G. Rawlinson, *India, A Short Cultural History*, *loc. cit.*, pp. 53-64.

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platform with 'a series of arcaded chambers' on the sides, and three massive domes, standing on twelve pillars each, thus leaving very little open space for the congregation. The tomb of Hushang Shah (1405-35), situated at the back of the mosque, is characterised by 'the extensive use of white marble, wide expanse of its dome, and an additional terrace, with four corner cupolas between the dome and the lower square chamber'. The *Hindola Mahal*—'the swinging palace', which is T-shaped in plan, was constructed by Hushang Shah for use as 'an assembly hall and royal apartments'. In its final stage of development, the Malwa style of Indo-Islamic architecture was characterised by 'the immense love for pleasure and luxurious life' for which the rulers of Malwa, particularly, Baz Bahadur, were quite notorious. The first example of this art style is furnished by the *Jahaz Mahal* which stands between two small lakes; a double-storeyed building 'with a facade of well-proportioned, tall and pointed arches', it was provided with turkish baths, pavilions, swimming pools and fountains, etc. Among other such monuments may be mentioned the palaces of Baz Bahadur and Roopmati in the vicinity of Mandu, and the waterpalace of *Kaliadeh* near Ujjain which was converted into a holiday resort by the hindu rulers of Gwalior during the later period. Chanderi (now in Madhya Pradesh), which formed a part of the Malwa kingdom in the fifteenth century, has also preserved a few monuments of the bygone days, including the *Jam i Masjid, Shahzadi ka Rauza*, the Madrasa tomb, and the seven-storeyed *Kushak Mahal*. The last monument of the period under review at Chanderi is the lofty *Badal Mahal*, a double-storey archway.

The contributions made by the Bahmani sultans towards the development of Indo-Islamic architecture as also the growth and development of art and architecture in the empire of Vijayanagar have been dealt with in chapter ten of this volume.

23. Fergusson, History of Indian and Eastern Architecture, *loc. cit.*

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Conclusion

The study of the foregoing pages brings to light three distinct phases of the political history of early medieval India. The first phase is covered by the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The scene opens with the country parcelled out into numerous regional kingdoms and principalities, governed mostly by parochial and uncreative rulers and feudal bureaucracy who, with a caste-ridden and 'self-stultified' hindu society as their base, were a poor match for their turkish adversaries. In two bloody bouts with the crusaders of Islam, their prominent champions of northern India were beaten hip and thigh; the 'stupefied' hindu masses realised the gravity of the situation only when the turkish rulers dubbed them as 'infidels' and classified them as second-rate citizens of 'an Islamic state' very much within their own homeland and in occupation of their ancestral hearths and homes. The twelfth century was marked by a grim struggle between the turkish victors and the middle-level socio-political leadership of the hindus of northern India in which the former came out successful in the long run; it is in this context that the political-cum-military actions of the 'slave' sultans, including Iltutmish and Balban, can be appreciated better. By the end of the twelfth century, the sultanate of Delhi was well-established and Islam firmly planted on the Indian soil. Though only a part of India had fallen into their hands, the clatter of the turkish arms had been heard across the Vindhyas.

The second phase of political history is marked by the accession of Alauddin Khalji to the throne of Delhi. He embarked upon an ambitious programme of imperial conquests and political unification of the country. He was amply rewarded in the enterprise; even those states, which could not be conquered by him, had to acknowledge the sultanate of Delhi to be the paramount power of the country. The imperial experiment proved successful though only for a shortwhile. It was all set for the consolidation of the imperial rule under the tughluqs; but, within a decade of his accession to the throne, Muhammad bin Tughluq bungled with the imperial structure and struck a serious blow at the academic as well as military powers of the sultanate; it opened the floodgates of disruption. The shortsighted state policy of Firoze Tughluq sapped the vitality of the sultanate almost completely and his death signalled the end of the secon d phase of the imperial history of early medieval India.

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The third phase is marked by the disintegration of the imperial government of India and the redivision of the country into provincial and regional states and feudal principalities besides the two mighty kingdoms of Bahmani and Vijayanagar in south India. By the beginning of the fifteenth century, India, apparently, presented, the old political pattern of the eleventh century though there was a marked difference in the nature and character of its polity. Many of the powerful rulers were muslims. Islam was firmly rooted in the soil and the muslims constituted a part and parcel of the Indian society as well as polity. An entirely new socio-political order, so to speak, had come into existence. Most of the Indian rulers were enlightened and benevolent monarchs who worked for the welfare and happiness of the subjects and enjoyed their confidence. Like their counterparts of the eleventh century, however, they were usually interlocked with their neighbouring chiefs in mutual conflicts and frittered away their resources; regionalism became, once again, the main theme of the Indian politics. Nevertheless, the Indian polity of the fifteenth century shows comparative maturity in its form and implementation over that of the eleventh century. The princes, whether hindus or muslims, were conscious of the fact that India should have a strong central authority *albeit* the clash of interests between the rival parties stood in the way of achieving that ideal. The political vacuum, thus caused at the central level, was filled in by Babar in the twenties of the sixteenth century.

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Appendix 1

Thirty-two Sultans of Lahore and Delhi (1206—1526)

Serial Number	Name of the Sultan	Accession (Christian era)	Relationship with Predecessor	Mode of death
		THE 'SLAVE' RULERS		
1.	Qutubuddin Aibek	1206	—	by accident
2.	Aram Shah	1210	son	defeated & killed
3.	Shamsuddin Iltutmish (son-in-law of Aibek)	1211	brother-in-law	natural
4.	Ruknuddin Firoze	April 1236	son	died in confinement
5.	Razia	November 1236	sister	defeated & killed
6.	Behram Shah	1240	brother	murdered
7.	Alauddin Masudshah (son of Ruknuddin & grandson of Iltutmish)	1242	nephew	died in confinement
8.	Nasiruddin Mahmud (grandson of Iltutmish; son of his eldest son Nasiruddin who predeceased his father)	1246	cousin	natural
9.	Ghiasuddin Balban	1266	son-in-law	natural
10.	Kaikubad (son of Bughra Khan, governor of Bengal)	1287	grandson	paralytic; kicked to death

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Serial Number	Name of the Sultan	Accession (Christian era)	Relationship with Predecessor	Mode of death
		THE KHALJIS		
11.	Jalaluddin Khalji	1290	—	murdered
12.	Ibrahim Ruknuddin	1296	son	defeated & murdered in confinement
13.	Alauddin Khalji (nephew & son-in-law of Jalaluddin) *Perhaps poisoned to death by Kafur	1296	cousin & brother-in-law	natural*
14.	Shihabuddin Umar	1316	son	murdered in confinement
15.	Mubarak Shah (son of Alauddin Khalji)	1316	brother	murdered
16.	Khusrau Shah	1320	usurper	killed in battle
		THE TUGHLUQS		
17.	Ghiasuddin Tughluq	1320	—	by accident
18.	Muhammad bin Tughluq	1325	son	natural
19.	Firoze Tughluq	1351	cousin	natural
20.	Tughluq Shah II (s/o Fateh Khan, who predeceased his father Firoze Tughluq)	1388	grandson	murdered
21.	Abu Bakr Shah	February 1389	cousin	died in confinement (1391)
22.	Muhammad (Third son of Firoze Tughluq)	1390*	uncle	natural

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	*rival of Abu Bakr enthroned at Samana in April 1389.			
23.	Sikandar Shah	January 1394	son	natural
24.	Nasiruddin Mahmud (s/o Muhammad, *serial* no. 22; aged ten)	March 1394	brother	natural
25.	Nusrat Shah (s/o Fateh Khan, the eldest son of Firoze Tughluq) *simultaneously with Nasiruddin Mahmud	1394*	cousin	died a fugitive

THE SAYYADS

26.	Khizr Khan	1414	—	natural
27.	Mubarak Shah	1421	son	murdered
28.	Muhammad Shah	1434	nephew	natural
29.	Alam Shah	1445	son	deposed

THE LODHIS

30.	Bahlol Lodhi	1451	—	natural
31.	Sikander Lodhi	1489	son	natural
32.	Ibrahim Lodhi	1517	son	died in battle

Notes : (a) Serial nos. 24 & 25 ruled simultaneously as rival claimants to the throne of Delhi.

(b) Nasiruddin Mahmud (serial no. 24) was the tughluq ruler who died in 1412.

(c) Daulat Khan Lodhi acted as *de facto* ruler of Delhi (1412-14) without any royal title; he was deposed by Khizr Khan; died in captivity.

Note : Out of the thirty-two sultans, thirteen died a natural death, two by accidents and four were killed on the battlefields; one was deposed and died a private citizen while as many as twelve sultans were murdered or died in confinement.

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Appendix 2

The Bahmani Sultans

Serial Number	Name of the Sultan	Accession (Christian era)
1.	Alauddin Hasan Bahmani (Capital Gulbarga)	1347
2.	Muhammad Shah I	1358
3.	Alauddin Mujahid	1375
4.	Daud Shah	April 1378
5.	Muhammad Shah II	May 1378
6.	Ghiasuddin Tahmtan	April 1397
7.	Shamuddin Daud II	June 1397
8.	Tajuddin Firoze	November 1397
9.	Shihabuddin Ahmad I (He transferred the capital to Bidar)	1422
10.	Alauddin Ahmad II	1436
11.	Humayun Shah	1458
12.	Nizamuddin Ahmad III	1461
13.	Shamsuddin Muhammad III	1463
14.	Shihabuddin Mahmud II	1482
15.	Ahmad Shah IV	1518
16.	Alauddin	1520
17.	Waliullah	1523
18.	Kalimullah (died a fugitive)	1526

Note : Out of the eighteen Bahmani sultans, three were deposed, five murdered, two blinded and two died of intemperance.

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Appendix 3

The Rulers of Vijayanagar

Serial Number	Name of the Ruler	Accession (Christian era)
	(a) SANGAMA DYNASTY	
1.	Harihar I	1336
2.	Bukka Rai I	1356
3.	Harihar II	1377
4.	Virupaksha I	1404
5.	Bukka II	1405
6.	Devaraya I	1406
7.	Ramchandra	1422
8.	Vijaya I	1422
9.	Devaraya II	1422
10.	Vijaya II	1446
11.	Mallikarjuna	1446
12.	Virupaksha II	1465
	(b) SALUVA DYNASTY	
13.	Narasimha	1485
14.	Timma	1490
15.	Immadi Narasimha	1491
	(c) TULUVA DYNASTY	
16.	Vira Narasimha	1505
17.	Krishna Devaraya	1509
18.	Achyuta Rai	1530
19.	Sadasiva*	1542

* a puppet in the hands of his Prime Minister Ram Raya; was kept in confinement at Vijayanagar at the occasion of the fateful battle of Talikota in 1565; after the fall of Vijayanagar, he set up a small principality at Penugonda where he was deposed by Tirumala in 1570.

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Glossary

aab	Water, a river
do'ab	land between two rivers
The Doab	territories situated between the Jumna and the Ganges
ahl	one who possesses, competent
ahl i kalam	men of the pen, scholars and writers; civil bureaucracy of the sultanate
ahl i ilm	men of knowledge, scholars, *ulema*
ahl i teg, ahl i shamshir	men of the sword, nobility of the sultanate
a'in	law, statute
akhur	horse
alai	of Alauddin Khalji
Allah	God
alp	first or the seniormost
amil	a revenue official
Amin ul Millat, Yamin ud Daulah	Protector of the muslims The righthand man of the empire (of the caliph)
amir	commander, title borne by independent muslim rulers of central Asia; nobleman; an imperial officer of the third grade, after *khan* and *malik*, under the sultans
amir i akhur	the master of horse (royal stables)
amir i hajib, barbek	officer in chrage of the royal court, lord chamberlain
amir i koh	officer in charge of agriculture
amir i shikar	officer in charge of the royal hunt
amir i tuzik	the master of ceremonies

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amiran	pl. of *amir*
amir ul momnin	'commander of the faithful', the Caliph
ariz	officer in charge of army
ariz i mamalik	chief of the army staff
auliya	saint
bakshi	paymaster, treasurer
banjara	grain carrier, corn merchant
baqqal	a grocer
barid	intelligence official, spy
barid i mamalik	head of the royal intelligence service
beg, bek	an officer of high grade
begum	a muslim lady of rank
bhakti	worship of the Divine, the doctrine of personal devotion to God
bhishti	water carrier
biswa	a unit of land measurement
burj	a tower
caravan, karwan	group of merchants travelling together who usually carried the merchandise on horseback, camels, ponies or carts
chadar, chaddar	a sheet of cloth, cloth worn over head and shoulders
chatr, chhatr	a parasol, royal canopy
chaudhri	a hindu landlord/chief of the village
chaukidar	night or village watchman
chungi	tax, octroi
crore	ten millions, a hundred lacs
dabir	secretary, clerk
dabir i mamalik	chief secretary, officer in charge of the royal secretariat
dagh	mark, branding of the army horses
dallal	broker
dargah	a muslim shrine, mausoleum of a saint
darogha	a subordinate police chief
dar ul adl	lit. place of justice; open market place of the metropolis of Delhi during the reign of Alauddin Khalji
dar ul harab, dar ul kufr	land of the infidels
dar ul Islam dar ul	land of the muslims; a muslim state
khalifa, dar ul mulk	lit. house of the caliph; imperial capital

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darbar, durbar	royal court
darvesh	a mystic saint
din	religion
dinar	silver coin (Roman)
dirham	copper coin (Roman)
divan	collection of poetic compositions
diwan	office, central secretariat, royal court, chief revenue officer of a province, finance minister
diwan i arz	ministry of defence
diwan i insha	office of the chief secretary, royal secretariat.
diwan i riyasat	minister in charge of trade and commerce
diwan i wizarat	office of the *wazir* or prime minister
duniya	the world
faqir	a poor man, a muslim mendicant
farman, firman	royal order, proclamation
fath	victory, conquest
fathnama	royal proclamation, letter of message of victory
fatwa	a legal decision according to Islamic law
fauj	army, troops
faujdar	commander of an army unit, officer in charge of a fort
fiqh	jurisprudence
gaz	yard, a unit of measurement equal to three feet
ghazi	devoted, a muslim who has taken a vow to fight the infidels
ghulam	slave
ghulam dar ghulam	slave of the slaves
habshi	Abyssinian, negro
hajib	chamberlain
hakim	physician, philosopher
haq	truth, the Absolute
haram, harem	secluded; females apartment of a household; women of a muslim family
hauz	a pond, water tank
hazar	one thousand

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Hindustan	India, used for northern India particularly
hukm	command, royal order, control
hukm i hasil	assessment of land revenue according to actual produce of the soil
ilm	knowledge, learning
imam	commander, leader; a title for the caliph; a person leading congregational muslim prayers
in'am	gift, reward
insaf	justice
iqta	a piece of land, a political-cum-administrative division under the sultans
iqtadar, muqta	person in charge of an iqta, governor
Ismaili	a sect of the *shia* muslims
jagir	a tract of land assigned by the state, assignment of land or land revenue held by an official in lieu of state service
jama'at	a party
jannat	paradise
jauhar	jewel, precious stone; a virtue; a rajput rite in which the ladies burnt themselves or were killed by their menfolk who sallied forth in saffron garments and laid down their lives in final charge against the enamy
jaziya	a religious tax imposed on non-muslims; any tax other than *khiraj* or land revenue
jihad	holy war against infidels by muslims
jital, jittal	copper coins, fractional currency of the sultans
kafir	unbeliever, infidel, a non-muslim
kahar	palanquin-bearer, porter
karkhana	factory, assembly of artisans and craftsmen who mechanically produced commodities needed by the royal household and armies
karkun	worker, petty official
khalifa	caliph; 'commander of the faithful'
khalisa	crown lands
khalq	the masses

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khan	mongol or turkish ruler of central Asia; officer of the first rank under the sultans
khanqah	a house of mystics; residential quarters of the mystics
khassadar	a local levy
khil'at	a robe of honour
kailafat	caliphate
khiraj	land revenue, also tribute paid by a subordinate chief
khuda	God
khut	a village headman
khutba	sermon
khwaja	lord, merchant, a person of status and standing
khwaja sera	eunuch
kos	a measure of distance or length larger than a mile
kotla	a residential fortress, cantonment, a permanent military station
kotwal	officer in charge of city or fort, a police chief
lakh	a hundred thousand, a lac
lakh baksh	giver of lacs in charity, generous
lashkar	army, army camp
lashkari	a soldier
madad i ma'ash	grant of land or pension to scholars and saints by the sultans
madrassah, madrassa	an educational institution, a school especially one for higher education
mahaut	an elephant driver or keeper
majlis	meeting place or assembly
maktab	an elementary school
malik	owner, proprietor, second highest grade of officers in the administrative hierarchy of the sultans
malik naib	regent of the sultanate, deputy sultan
malika i jahan	lit. queen of the world, title of the chief queen of the sultans
manqul	Islamic theology
mamalikat	state, kingdom

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mameluk	slave officer
mann	maund
maqbara	tomb
masjid	mosque, a muslim house of prayer
masnavi	a poetic composition, a narrative poem in Persian
maulana	a muslim scholar, man of learning
mlechcha	unclean foreigner, an infidel from the point of view of hindus
millat	a religious community, muslim brotherhood
minar	a pillar
mir	a leader, title of the independent chieftains of Sind
muhtasib	public censor of morals
mulla, mullah	a muslim religious leader or divine
mulk	country, dominion
mandi	grain market
munshi	an officer who enforced orders concerning things forbidden
munsif	small cases judge
muqaddam	lit. first or seniormost man, village headman
mushrif	officer in charge of treasury and accounts
nabi	prophet
naib	deputy, a representative
naubat	drum, beating of the drum
nasr amir ul momnin	'deputy of the leader of the faithful'
nauroz	muslim new year's day
padshah, padishah	emperor
paibos	kissing of the feet
paik, piadeh	footman
palki	palanquin or a litter
pargana	a subdivision of the district for administrative and revenue purposes
patwari	a village official who kept land records
pir	spiritual guide
purdah	curtain, a muslim practice of keeping women in seclusion
qahat	famine

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qalandar	a muslim mendicant or wandering *faqir*
qasba	a town
qasr	a palace
qazi	a muslim judge
qazi ul qazzat	*qazi* of the *qazis*; the chief justice of the sultanate
qila	a fort
qutb, qutub	pole star, the axis
rai, raja, rana	a hindu chief
ra'iyyat	the subjects
rani	a hindu queen or princess
risala	a cavalry unit
risaldar	a cavalry commander
sadah	lit. a hundred, officers who administered territorial units with about a hundred villages or had a hundred soldiers under their command
sadi	a century
sadr	justice of peace and head of the ecclesiastical establishment
sadr i jahan, sadr us sadur	minister in charge of ecclesiastical affairs
sahib	chief
sanad	order of appointment
sani	second
sar i jandar	chief of the royal bodyguards
sar i lashkar	the chief huntsman
sarai, serai	inn, rest house
saudagar	merchant prince
sawar	horseman
saiyyid, sayyad	a descendant of the Prophet
senapati	a hindu commander
shaikh (Arabic)	chief, a spiritual leader, muslim mystic, a man of distinction
shamsi	of Shamsuddin Iltutmish
shashgani	a fractional currency equivalent to six *jitals*
shahzada	a prince
shiq	an administrative unit, roughly of district level
shiqdar	officer in charge of a *shiq*

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shahna	a police chief, officer in charge of a town or market
shahna i mandi	officer in charge of the grain market under Alauddin Khalji
sifat	appreciation, description, characteristic
sikka	coin
sipahsalar	commander
sultanate	kingdom, kingship, empire of the sultans of Delhi
tajir	a merchant
takhtagah	capital
tanka	silver coin of the sultanate
thakur	a hindu chief
tola	a measure of weight
tuman	a regiment of ten thousand soldiers
Tuti e Hind	'The Parrot of India', a title borne by Amir Khusrau
ulama, ulema	pl. of *alim*, a muslim scholar, theologian
umara	pl. of *amir*
vakil	agent, deputy, minister
varna, varuna	colour, caste
vezir, wazir	minister, prime minister of the sultans
walayat	foreign country, alien land
wali	governor
wali'ahad	heir apparent
waqf	endowment
waqia	an occurrence, an event
wazifa	stipend
zabita	law, statute (pl. *zawabit*)
zakat	a religious tax payable by the muslims in an 'Islamic state'
zamindar	one who holds land under a zamindari system, a collector of land revenue
zalim	a tyrant
zar	cash, gold and silver
zar kharid	purchased, a slave
zill	shadow
Zill i Ilahi	'shadow of God on earth'; a title borne by the absolute monarchs

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Index

Abbasids, the, 39, 50, 95, 116
Abdullah (of Koil), 23
Abdur Razzak, 20-21, 272, 283-86, 290-91
Abidin, Zainul, see Zainul Abidin
Abohar (Punjab), 14, 197
Abu Bakr, the Caliph, 143
,, ,, ,(grandson of Firoze Tughkuq), 240
,, ,, , (*wazir* of Nasiruddin Mahmud), 107
Abu Hanifa, 298
Abu Ishaq, 47fn
Abu Ma'ashar, 39
Abu S'aid, 208-9
Abul Abbas, Fasih Ahmad, 62fn
Abul Fazl Allami, see Allami, Abul Fazl
Abul Fazl Baihaqi, see Baihaqi, Abul Fazl
Adhai din ka jhompra, 317
Adina masjid, 321
Aeitigin, Ikhtiyaruddin, 102-4
Afghanistan, 31-32, 47, 50, 73-76, 92, 110, 122, 125, 127, 131-32, 159, 165, 209-10, 217, 242, 254
Afif, Shams i Siraj, 14-15, 221-22, 225-30, 233, 235-36
Afrasiyab, 118
Africa, 19, 276, 290-91, 297, 314
Agnikula rajputs, 34, 36, 41-42
Agra, 19, 251-52
Ahichhatra, 94
Ahmad, bin Hanbal, 298
,, ,, , Khwaja Nizamuddin, 17, 22
,, ,, , Yadgar, see Yadgar, Ahmad
Ahmadabad, 263, 323
Ahmadnagar, 24-25, 273, 278, 281-85
Ahomes, the, 71
Aiba, Bahram, see Kishlu Khan
Aibek, Qutubuddin, 6, 7, 9, 69-70, 78-82, 84-91, 96-97, 114-15, 120, 124-26, 131-32, 228, 274, 289, 295, 317, 327
Ain i Akbari, 15, 22
A'izzuddin, 17fn
Ajmer (Ajayameru), 7, 26, 35, 48, 53, 59, 64-69, 76-81, 88, 94, 289, 317
Ajodhan (Pakpatan), 130
Akbar, 15, 23-24, 26, 151, 167, 180, 182, 263, 265, 322
Akbarnama, 22
Akhund Darvesh, 31
Al-Hajjaj, 37-38
Al-Qadir Billah, 50
Alai Darwaza, 318
Alaul Mulk, 12, 134, 139-40, 142, 144
Alberuni, 3-5, 31-33, 40, 44, 49, 59, 62, 136fn
Albuquerque, 291
Ali, the Caliph, 143
Ali, Muhammad, bin Abu Bakr Kufi, 3
Ali Shir, 18
Aligarh, see Koil
Alinama (of Muhammad Nusrat), 279
Allahabad, see Kara
Allami, Abul Fazl, 15, 22
Almas Beg, see Ulugh Khan
Alor (Aror), 38
Alptagin, 32, 47
Altunia, 102-3
Alwar, 55
Ambad, 281
Ambala, 56fn, 234
Amber, see Jaipur
,, ,, , Malik, 281
Amir, Amir Hulajun, 216

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Amir Khusrau, 9-12, 19, 39, 96, 124-25, 147-49, 157
,, ,, , Nauroz, 208
,, ,, , Timur, 15-16, 18, 21, 123, 191, 241-47, 254, 257-58, 261, 263-64, 284, 320, 322
,, ,, , Turghay, 242
Amroha, 164
Amuktamalyada, 288
Anandpal, 51-54, 56
Anang Pauls (of Delhi), 65-69
Andaman islands, 21
Andhra Pradesh, 37
Andhras, the, 37
Anegundi (Kampili), 197, 271
Anhilwara, 35, 37, 60, 69, 80-81, 145, 219
Anushtegin, 74fn
Arabia, 275, 290
Arabian peninsula, 19
Aram Shah, see Shah, Aram
Archaeological sources, 27-28
Aristotle, 144
Arjuna (Kachchapaghata ruler of Gwalior), 36
Arnoraja, 67
Arunanandi, 258
Aruzi, Abul Hasan Nizami, 7fn
Ash-shafi, 298
Ashiqa, see *Deval Rani Khizr Khani*
Asirgarh, 135
Askari, Mirza, 23
Asni, 80
Assam, 34, 70-71, 82
Atala Devi, 322
Attock, 32, 54
Auliya, Sheikh Nizamuddin, 10, 12, 19, 319
Ayas, Ahmad, 197, 216
Ayaz, Malik Izzuddin Kabir Khan, 101fn, 102, 104

Babar, 19, 23, 239, 254, 264, 300, 326
Babinya, Jam, 236-37
Badal, 149
Badami, see Vatapi
Badaun, 69, 81, 89-91, 94, 96, 99, 107, 109-11, 119-20, 169, 177, 249
Badauni, Abdul Qadir, 17, 22
Badiuz Zaman, see Zaman, Badiuz
Bagha masjid, 322
Baghdad, 17, 38-39, 63, 95, 116, 200
Baghela, Karan Dev, 145
Bagmati, the, 34
Bahadur, Ghiasuddin, 216, 260
,, ,, , Baz, 324
Baauddin, Sam, 74
Bahmanids, the, 17, 24-25, 259, 266-77, 321, 324, 326, 330
Bahmanshah, Alauddin Hasan, see Shah, Abul Muzafar Alauddin Bahman
Bahraich, 105-6, 110
Baihaqi, Abul Fazl, 6, 62
Balban, Ghiasuddin, 8-10, 12-13, 17, 87, 99, 104-8, 126-27, 136, 139-41, 165, 187, 192, 194, 298, 308, 325, 327
Balkh, 8fn, 47fn, 49fn
Ballala, Vir III, 218
,, ,, , Vir IV, 218
Baluchistan, 33, 38, 52
Banaras, see Varanasi
Baniyan, 94, 96
Bannu, 51fn
Baqbak, Malik, 119-21
Bara Gumbad, 320
,, ,, , *Sona*, 322
Baran (Bulandshahr), 79, 90-91, 127, 139, 171, 213, 244
Barani, Ziauddin, 1fn, 11-14, 17, 79-80, 114-18, 120-23, 125-34, 136-47, 152-58, 160-62, 164-66, 168-77, 179-80, 184-85, 190-91, 193-96, 198-204, 206-13, 216, 221, 299
Barbosa, Duarte, 21-22, 283-84
Bardai, Chand, 26, 69fn
Bare Khan (tomb), 320
Bappa Rawal, 36
Bashir, Malik, 237
Basht, 18
Basra, 111, 113
Battuta, see Ibn Battuta
Bayabani, Shah Ashraf, 281
Bayana, 80-81, 94, 141

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Beg. Ali, 163-64
,, ,, , Targhi, 162-63
Bengal, 8, 10, 24, 30, 33, 45, 70, 81-83, 94, 104-6, 118fn, 120-22, 125-26, 152, 159, 178, 192-93, 216-17, 235-36, 248, 252, 259-61, 265, 291, 295, 305, 321-22, 327
Berar, 25, 267, 270, 273, 281, 284-85
Bhagwad Gita, 4fn
Bhakhar, 24, 93
Bharatum, 288
Bhaskervarman, 34
Bhatinda (Bathinda, Tabarhind), 65, 76-78, 104, 108-9
Bhatnair, 243
Bhatiya, 52
Bhilsa, 76, 94, 96, 132, 137
Bhimdeo I, 60
Bhimpal, 56-57
Bhojpur, 116
Bhojraja (Parmardeo), 34-35, 70
Bhua, Mian, 243
Bidar, 25, 216-17, 266-68, 270, 273, 277, 279-85, 331
Bihar, 33, 45, 70, 81-83, 87, 91, 93-94, 104-6, 125-26, 159-60, 192, 253, 261-63, 305
Bijai Mandal, 319
Bijapur, 25, 36, 268, 270, 273-74, 278, 281-85
Bijayapal, 67
Bika, Rana, 265
Bikaner, 265
Bilkatagin, 47fn
Billah, Al-Mustansir, 95
Billah, Al-Qadr, see Al-Quadir Billah
Birbhum, 82
Bisaldev, 53fn, 64-67
Bukhara, 47, 63, 73fn, 34fn, 196, 209
Bukka Rai I, 218, 271, 287, 331
Bukka Rai II, 331
Bulandshahr, see Baran
Bundelkhand, 35, 57, 70, 81, 111, 116
Bundi, 81
Burhan i Ma'asir, 24
Burhanpur, 23, 278
Burhanuddin, Malik, 189
Brahmapala, 34
Brahmaputra, the, 29fn, 34, 70-71
Brahmanabad, 38
Broach, 219
Burma, 76, 290

Cairo, 22, 200
Calicut, 291
Cambay, 146, 210
Cape of Good Hope, 291
Caspian sea, 74fn, 92
Central Asia, 4, 7-9, 18
Ceylon, 20-21, 37, 272-73
Chach, 3, 32
Chachnama, 2-3, 24
Chakkiyarkuttu, 289
Chalukya, Bhimdeo I, 35, 69
Chaluka, Durlabhraja, 35
Chalukya, Jaisingh Siddharaja, 69
Chalukya, Mularaja, 35
Chalukyas, the, 29, 34-37, 40-42, 69, 81, 94, 145fn, 146
Chanakya, 63
Chand Minar, 281
Chand, Sheikh, 25
Chandela, Madanvarman, 70
Chandela, Nanak, 35
Chandelas, the, 35-36, 81, 90
Chanderi, 133-35, 150, 253, 262, 324
Chandlgarh, 56fn
Chandra, Harish (s/o Jai Chand), 79, 89
Chandragupta Maurya, 63
Chandwar, 79
Changez Khan, see Khan, Changez
Chap, Malik Ahmad, 129-30, 134-35, 140
Chauhan, Govindraja, alias Gandu, 35, 79-80
Chauhan, Hari Rai, 80
Chauhan, Prithviraj I, 66
Chauhan, Prithviraj II, 64-65, 67
Chauhan, Prithviraj III, 7, 26, 35fn, 68-70, 76-78, 88-89, 126
Chauhans, the, 7, 26, 34-35, 40-42, 53fn, 64-70, 81, 88-89, 94, 126, 135, 148
Chedi (mod. Tripura), 37, 70
Chenab, the, 32, 92

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Cheras, the, 37
Chhajju, Malik, 128-30, 131fn, 137-38
Chhota Sona, 322
Chhote Khan (tomb), 320
Chidambaram, 290
Chihalgani or *Chehalgan*, the, 96, 99-122
China, 20-21, 204-5, 210, 277, 290
Chittor, 69, 149-52, 163, 173, 183, 263-65
Choda Ganga, Ananta Varman, 265
Chola, Rajendra I, 33, 37
Cholas, the, 33, 37
Chunda Rana, 264
Cochin, 22
Constantinople, 291fn
Conti, Nicolo, 21-22, 272, 283-88

Dabhol, 267
Dadi ka Gumbad, 320
Dahir, 30, 32, 38
Daman, 291
Damammini, Muhazibuddin, 278
Damascus, 21, 38, 321
Dandivarman, 37
Dastur ul Wuzara, 18
Daud, Abul Fateh, 52, 55
Daulatabad, see Deogiri
Davar, Malik, 222
Debal, 38, 65, 76-77, 93-94
Delhi, 2, 7-9, 12, 14-17, 19-20, 25, 27, 33, 35, 53, 64-68, 76-80, 88-96, 98-100, 102-6, 108, 110-11, 114-18, 122, 129, 132, 135, 139-40, 142, 144-67, 170-73, 177-81, 184, 188-202, 210-11, 213, 215-30, 234-66, 271, 274, 276, 285, 292, 294-95, 297-301, 306-7, 313-23, 325, 327, 329
Deogiri (Daulatabad), 138, 145, 151-55, 158-59, 182-84, 186-87, 191, 197-202, 216-19, 223, 266-81, 319
Depalpur, 123-24, 165, 186, 188, 222, 243, 245, 247, 249, 254
Dera Ismail Khan, 75
Dervesh, Akhund, 31
Desikar, Svarupananda, 288
Dev, Hamir, 147-48
Dev, Ramchandra, 132-33, 145, 151-58, 183, 185
Deva, Ajaya, 53fn, 70, 81
Deva, Bhattakalanka, 289
Deva, Bhim II, 145fn
Deva, Harpal, 183-84
Deva, Kanhar, 150
Deva, Karan, 152-53
Deva, Mahlak, 150
Deva, Pratap Rudra II, 151, 154, 191, 218, 225, 271
Deva, Rai I, 289, 331
Deva, Rai II, 272, 284, 331
Deva, Shankara (Singhana), 158, 182-83
Deva, Shital, 150
Deval Rani, 10, 152-53, 155, 158-59
Deval Rani Khizr Khani, 9, 10
Devapala, 33
Devi, Kamla, 145-46, 152-53, 158-59
Devi, Parmal, 38fn
Devi, Suraj, 38fn
Dhamyak, 82
Dhangaraja, 36
Dhar (Ujjain), 34, 70, 150, 323
Dharamanathapurana, 289
Dharwar, 197fn
Dholpur, 251
Dida, Rani, 33
Dinajpur, 82
Dipalpur, 121-22, 164, 186, 188, 222, 243, 245, 247, 249, 257
Diu, 263, 291
Do Boti Chira, 281
Doab, the, 50fn, 79, 109, 113, 121fn, 212-16, 241, 248, 250, 305, 320
Domingos Paes, see Paes Domingos
Duarte Barbosa, see Barbosa Duarte
Dughlat, Mirza Hyder, 26fn
Durjaya (mod. Gauhati), 34
Dwarsamudra, 151, 156-58

Early Chalukyas, 35-37
Egypt, 208-10
Ellichpur, 133-34, 152-53
Ellora, 153
Etawa, 79

Faiz, 278
Fakhre Mudir, 89
Fakhruddin, 114-15, 123, 128-29, 148
Farabi, 62

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 Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Farah Bagh, 281
Fariduddin, Sheikh, Ganj i Shakar *alias* Farid, 130
Farmuli, Mian Husain Khan, 253
Fatawa i Jahandari, 13-14, 180
Fatehabad, 225fn, 234, 243
Fathanama i Lakhnauti, 11
Firdausi, 62
Firishta, 17, 33, 48, 51, 53-55, 58-59, 77-78, 118, 120, 134, 154-57, 164-65, 168, 170, 176-80, 183, 187, 190, 193, 195-96, 199-200, 210-11, 233, 239-40, 242, 267, 278
Firoz Koh, 9
Firozabad (Delhi), 231, 233-34, 240, 320
Firoze, Ruknuddin, 98-101, 104, 295, 327
Futuhat i Firozeshahi, 14, 223, 227-29, 231-32
Futuhus Salatin, 17-18, 107-8, 114
Gagan Mahal, 281
Gahadavalla, Chandradeva, 68-69
Gahadavallas (of Kanauj), 66-69, 81
Gandaraja, 36, 38, 58, 81
Ganges ; the Gangetic valley, 8, 19, 29, 56-57, 60, 64, 66, 68-69, 79-80, 94, 104, 111, 113, 116, 120, 126, 129, 135, 164
Gangeya, Apara, 67
Gangeya raja, 36
Gardizi, 51, 53, 55, 58-59
Gaud (Gaur), see Lakhnauti
Gawan, Mahmud, 25, 268-70, 277-78, 280
Gesu i Daraz, Khwaja Band Nawaz, 278
Ghazi, Malik, see Tughluq, Ghiasuddin
Ghazi, Sikander Khan, 34fn, 71
Ghazi, Zafar Khan, 321
Ghazni (Ghazna), 4-8, 9, 32, 35, 47-65, 73-75, 77, 79-83, 88-92, 95, 97, 104, 165, 208-9
Ghazni (or Ghaznavi), Mahmud, see Mahmud of Ghazni
Ghazni Behram, 73fn
Ghiasuddin, Husanuddin, 9, 93
Ghiasuddin (of Ghur), 65, 74, 82-83
Ghor, see Ghur
Ghori, Dilawar Khan, 262, 323
Ghori, Malik Qutubuddin Hasan, 101
Ghori, Muhammad, see Muhammad Ghori
Ghori, Saifuddin, 267, 275
Ghur (or Ghorjistan), 6, 18, 74, 86
Ghuzz Turks, 65, 75-76
Gilani, Hakim Nizamuddin, 278
Goa, 266-67, 269, 272-73, 291
Godavari, the, 265
Gol Gumbad, 281
Golconda, 24-25, 270, 273, 278, 281-82, 285
Gomal Pass, 75
Gomti, the, 322
Gonds, the, 35
Gopala, 33
Gopalgir, 115
Gora, 149
Govind Rai, 76-79
Govind Raja *alias* Gandu, see Chauhan, Govind Raja
Guhilat or Guhila rajputs, 36, 69-70, 94
Gujarat, 19, 23-24, 29, 39, 60, 69 81, 145, 152-53, 159, 178, 183-84, 188, 192, 218-19, 223, 236, 244, 248, 259, 262-64, 267-68, 278, 281, 291, 305, 321-23
Gul Bahisht, 150
Gulbarga, 217, 266-67, 271-72, 279-80, 331
Gulshan i Ibrahimi, 278
Gulshan i Ishaq, 279
Gunakamdeva, 34
Gupta empire, 33-34, 40
Gurg, Kamaluddin, 150, 216
Gurjara-Pratiharas, the, see Pratiharas
Gurshasp, Bahauddin, 197-98, 200
Gwaligarh, 281
Gwalior, 8, 30, 36, 53, 57-58, 68, 80, 89-91, 94, 102, 111, 134, 153, 183-84, 248, 251-53, 324

Habibus Siyar, 18-19
Hafiz, Khwaja Shamsuddin, 278
Haft Gumbad, 279

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Haji Maula, 148
Hajji ud Dabir, 214
Hamir, Rana, 263
Hansi, 64, 67, 99, 109, 112, 114
Haravi Khwaja Niamatullah, 23
Hardutt, 57
Hardwar, 245
Harihar I, 218, 271-72, 331
,, ,, , II, 271, 289, 331
Hariraja, 78
Harun al Rashid, 297 fn
Haryana (Hariana), 29, 114, 229
Hasan Gangu, see Shah, Abul Muzafar Alauddin Bahman
,, ,, , Malik Qutubuddin, 73fn
,, ,, , Mirza, 21
,, ,, , Nizami, 6-8, 89-95
Houz i Ilahi, 232, 290
Hazbaruddin (Zafar Khan), 140
Hazru, 54
Herat, 18, 20, 32, 73
Himalayas, the, 33, 67, 159, 210-11
Hindola Mahal, 323
Hindukush, the, 32
Hindushahis, the, 31-32, 35, 47-57
Hissar Firoza, 229, 234, 320
Hooghly, 321
Humayun (the Mughal emperor), 19, 23, 262-63
Hushang, Malik, 216
Hussain, Alauddin, see Alauddin Husain
Husaini, Abu Talib, 15

Ibn Asir, 58fn, 59fn
Ibn Battuta, 19-21, 47, 52, 102-3, 154, 156, 164-65, 187-88, 193, 196, 199-202, 207-9, 215
Ibrahim Ghaznavi, 8fn
Ibrahim, Rauza, 281
Ijaz i Khusravi, 11
Ikdala fort, 235-36
Ikhtiyaruddin Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khalji, see Khalji, . . .
I-lak, Khans, 47, 52
Iltutmish, Shamsuddin, 7-9, 17, 69, 81-82, 87, 89-99, 101, 103-5, 107, 111-15, 119, 121, 126-27, 132, 148, 159, 232, 317-18, 325, 327
Ilyas, Haji, 235
Imadul Mulk, 113
Imamuddin, 23
Indus, the, 51-54, 82, 93, 99, 159-61, 164, 222, 241, 243
Inju, Fazlullah, 277-78
Iqbal, Mallu, 241, 243-44, 247
Iqbalmand, 164-65
Iraq, 37, 209, 275-76
Isami, Fakhr Malik, 17fn
,, ,, , Khwaja Abdullah Malik, 17-18, 107, 200
Ishaq, Jalaluddin, 20

Jafar, Malik Tajuddin, 189
Jagadhari, 14fn
Jagannatha temple, 265
Jahangir, 23-24
Jahansoz, Alauddin Husain, 74-75
Jahaz Mahal, 324
Jaichand, 69, 79-81
Jaijakbhukti, 35
Jain Rajatarangini, 26
Jaipal, 31-32, 36, 48-51
Jaisalmer, 145
Jaisimha, 36
Jajnagar, see Orissa
Jalalabad, 48fn
Jalandhar, 160
Jalor, 94-95, 150
Jamait Khana, 318
Jamaluddin, Sheikh, 111-12
Jambukewara, 290
Jani, Malik Alauddin, 93, 101fn
Jarbazkani, Abul Sharaf, 6fn
Jaunpur, 234, 248, 251, 259, 261-62, 291, 320-21
Java, 21
Jawalamukhi temple, 236
Jayanka, 26
Jayasi, Malik Muhammad, 149fn
Jhain, 132
Jhanjiri, 322
Jhansi, 70
Jhelum, the, 82, 90fn
Jodha, Rana, 264
Jodhpur, 94, 132, 264
Jonaraja, 25
Jubbulpore, 36

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Jugodeva, 67
Junaid, Khwaja Hisamuddin, 228
Junaidi, Nizamul Mulk, 99-100
,, ,, , Saifuddin, 101
Junar, 270
Juzjan, 8fn
Jyots-nakara, 25

Kabali, Muhammad Ali, 278
Kabul, 31-32, 47-48, 165, 243, 248, 254
Kachhapaghata, 58
Kachhan, Aitmar, 127
Kafur, Malik, 152-65, 182-84, 198, 296, 328
Kai Khusrau, 122-25
Kaimurs, 127-28
Kaiqubad, 10, 16-27, 123-24, 327
Kaithal, 103-4, 243
Kaki, Khusrau Shah, 328
,, ,, , Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar, 89, 91, 317
,, ,, , Shihabuddin Umar, 328
Kakka II, 73
Kalachuri, Gayakarna, 70
Kalachuris, the, 3fn, 36-37, 70
Kalanaur, 197
Kalhana Pandit, 25, 31fn
Kali masjid, 281
Kalidasa, 289
Kalimullah, 331
Kalinga, 37, 271
Kalinjar, 30, 36, 48, 53, 57-58, 68, 70, 80-82, 90, 94, 111
Kalka, 56fn
Kalpi, 251-52
Kalyani, 25, 35; Later Chalukyas of, 35-37
Kamaluddin, 189
Kamil ut Tawarikh, 58
Kampila, 116, 197, 250
Kamrup, see Assam
Kanara, 271
Kanauj, 29-30, 35, 48, 50-51, 53, 57-58, 61, 65-70, 79-81, 91, 94, 109, 241, 261
Kanchi, 36, 271
Kanchipuram, 290
Kangra, 12, 29-30, 109, 128, 132-35, 137-41, 153, 217
Karan, Rana, 10
Karkota dynasty, 33
Karnal, 77
Karnataka Sabdanusasana, 289
Kasi, see Varanasi
Kashmi, Qazi Jalal, 130
Kashmir, 25-26, 30, 33, 53, 57-58, 178, 261-65
Katehar, 94, 96, 118
Kathiawar, 58, 69
Kathmandu (Kantipur), 34
Kaushal, see Oudh
Kaushik, see Allahabad
Kesh, 242
Khalji, Alauddin, 10-11, 40, 117, 122, 129, 131-35, 137-86, 188-95, 200, 205, 214, 217, 220, 229-30, 262-63, 274, 289, 294-95, 298-301, 304, 307-8, 310-11, 318, 322, 325, 328
,, ,, , Ibrahim Rukunuddin, 328
,, ,, , Ikhtiyasuddin Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar, 24, 70, 81-82, 84, 91, 125, 260
,, ,, , Jalaluddin, 10, 12, 124-38, 160, 187, 194, 328
,, ,, , Mahmud Khan, 262, 323
,, ,, , Mubarakshah, 184-85, 188-89, 192, 195, 214, 294, 328

Khan, Abdullah, 131
,, ,, , Ahmad Ali, 250
,, ,, , Akat, 147-48, 168
,, ,, , Ali Muhammad, 24
,, ,, , Alp (Malik Sanjar), 137-38, 152-53
,, ,, , Arkali, 12, 128, 132, 138-40
,, ,, , Bahram, 217
,, ,, , Barbak, 262
,, ,, , Batu, 9
,, ,, , Bughra, 10, 107fn, 121, 123, 192-93, 327
,, ,, , Chaghatai, 9
,, ,, , Changez, 9, 18, 92-93, 131, 159-60, 163, 242, 254
,, ,, , Daulat, 241-42, 249fn
,, ,, , Deva, 160-65
,, ,, , Fateh, 225
,, ,, , Haibat, 119, 121
,, ,, , Halaku, 9, 110, 112, 131, 160

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Khan, Hamid, 249-50
,, ,, , Jalal, 252-53
,, ,, , Juna, *Khan i Khana*, 238
,, ,, , Khizr, 10, 140, 153-54, 158, 183-85, 329
,, ,, , Kishlu (Bahram Aiba), 104, 108-13, 189, 197
,, ,, , Khusrau (Later Shah), 11, 185-90, 195
,, ,, , Kublai, 21, 204
,, ,, , Mallu, 243, 247
,, ,, , Mangu, 9, 148
,, ,, , Muhammad, 234
,, ,, , Nusrat, 135-36, 139-40, 143-47
,, ,, , Qadar, 139-40, 160, 217
,, ,, , Qutulugh, 105, 109-11, 216, 218
,, ,, , Rumi, 281
,, ,, , Sarang, 243, 245-47
,, ,, , Sir Sayyad Ahmad, 1fn
,, ,, , Shadi, 183-85, 189, 192
,, ,, , Sikander, 235-36
,, ,, , Tamar, 104
,, ,, , Tatar, 254
,, ,, , Tughril, 70fn, 120-23
,, ,, , Ulghu (Almas Beg), 131, 136-40, 143-45, 148, 152, 160-62, 175, 187-88
,, ,, , Umar, 148
,, ,, , Zafar (Malik Mazbaruddin) 136fn, 139-40, 143-45, 160-63, 185
Khajuraho, 36, 70
Khalid, Abdul, 8fn
Khalis Mukhlis, 322
Khalna, 269
Khandah, 60
Khandesh, 248, 265, 267
Khanua (or Khanwah), 264
Khatu, Gai, 204
Khatun, Taghina, 242
Khazain ul Futuh, (*Tarikh i Ilahi*), 9-10, 148-50
Kherla, 277
Khizrabad, 320
Khokhar, Jasrath, 248-49
Khokhars, the, 82, 90-92, 94, 104
Khondamir, 18-19
Khulasat ul Akhbar, 18-19
Khumman, Aziz, 218
Khurasan, 6, 18, 21, 47-50, 73-74, 93, 103, 208-10, 212, 214, 284
Khusrau, Amir, see Amir Khusrau
Khusrau, Malik, 9, 65, 77
Khushnama, 278
Khwaja i Jahan, 12, 222
Khwarizm, 3-4, 74-76, 90
Khwarizm Shah, see Muhammad, Alauddin Khwarizm Shah
Khyber pass, 32, 49, 51-53, 63, 75, 110, 210, 220, 243, 294
Kitab ur Rehla, 19-21, 47, 52, 102-3, 154, 156, 164-65, 187-88, 193, 196, 199-202, 207-9, 215
Kirghis steppes, 73fn
Kolhapur, 267
Koil (Aligarh), 79-81, 250
Koka, Pradhan, 150
Kondavir, 269
Konkan, 269
Kondhana (Singh Garh), 197
Kota, 81
Kotla Firoze Shah, 234, 320
Krishna Nayak, 218
Krishna, the, 132, 267, 272, 274
Kshemgupta, 33fn
Kubak, 164-65
Kuchi, Malik Saifuddin, 101fn
Kulashekhar, 158
Kulchand, 57
Kumarpala, 145fn
Kumaun-Garhwal, 211
Kumbakonan, 290
Kumbh, Rana, 264
Kurundirattu, 288
Kushak Mahal, 324
Kushana empire, 33
Kutch, 29, 35, 60

Lahore, 32, 57, 61, 64-65, 67, 75-77, 87-89, 91-93, 99, 102, 104, 108, 110-11, 121, 123-24, 160-61, 165, 187, 189, 196, 216, 245, 247-49, 254, 305, 317, 327
Lais, Yakub bin, 32
Lakhanpal, 69fn
Lakhnauti (Gaur), 8-9, 11, 33, 70, 82-83, 93, 95, 105, 120-21, 125, 161, 192-93, 217, 260, 321, 322
Lakshmansena, 70, 81-83
Lakshmiteshwar, 281

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Lal Darwaza masjid, 322
Lalitaditya, 30
Lalliya, 31-32
Lamghan, 48
Lawik, Abu Bakr, 32, 47fn
Lodhi, Alam Khan, 254
Lodhi, Behlol, 23, 248-51, 254, 263, 297, 329
Lodhi, Behram, 249
Lodhi, Daulat Khan, 254-55, 297, 329
Lodhi, Dilawar Khan, 254
Lodhi, Ibrahim, 252-54, 264, 294, 329
Lodhi, Khan Jahan, 23-24, 253
Lodhi, Sikander, 251-52, 261, 291, 297
Lohani, Dariya Khan, 253
Lohara dynasty, 33
Loharin (Lohkot), 57
Lohraja, 25
Loni, 105
Lotan, 322

Madura, 20, 152, 157-58, 216, 218, 271, 289-90
Madhya Pradesh, 36, 324
Mahabharata, the, 65, 288-89
Mahal Hazar Satun, 319
Maharashtra, 29, 178, 199, 218-19
Mahiya Kamal, 118
Mahmud Gawan, see Gawan, Mahmud
Mahmud, Nasiruddin (Prince), 92, 94, 98, 105, 327
Mahmud, Nasiruddin (Sultan), 8-9, 17, 104-14, 195-97, 318, 327
Mahmud, of Ghazni, 4, 6, 8, 30-33, 35-37, 40, 44-47, 49-64, 66, 70-75, 83-85, 125-26, 156, 158, 211, 246, 300
Mahmud, Tajul Mulk, 99fn
Mahoba, 68, 70, 81
Mahru, 137-39
Makh, Ismail, 266-67
Makhduma i Jahan, 268
Malabar (Ma'abar) 22, 39, 45, 152, 215-16, 255
Malaya archipelago, 290
Malda, 82-83
Maldeo, 149:50
Maldive Islands, 20
Malik, Abdul, 47fn
Malik, ibn Anas, 298
Malik, Kala, 249
Malik, Khusrau, 8, 75-76, 211
Malik, Sultan Shah, 249
Malika i Jahan, 105fn, 109
Malfuzat i Timuri, see *Tuzuk i Timuri*
Mallanarya, 289
Mallikarjuna, 331
Malwa, 19, 30, 35, 37, 69-70, 80-81, 96, 99, 111, 150, 152, 159, 216, 218, 222, 248, 259, 261-64, 267-69, 281, 291, 305, 321, 323-24
Mamun, the Abbasid Caliph, 47fn
Man Singh (of Gwalior), 251-53
Mandsor, 94-95
Mandu, 150, 323-24
Manikpur, 128, 135
Manikbarni, Jalaluddin, 92-94
Mansur, 48 fn
Mansurah, 39-40, 92-93
Maqbul, Khan i Jahan, 224-26, 233, 236, 257
Marco Polo, 21
Marwar, 259, 263-64, 291, 321
Masalik ul Absar, 207
Masaud, Shihabuddin, 137fn
Masud, Sultan, 6
Masudshah, Alauddin, 106, 295
Masum, Mir Muhammad, 24
Mathura, 50, 57, 61
Matla us Sa'dain wa Majma uj Bahrain, 20-21
Mauryan empire, 33-34, 37
Mecca, 20, 25, 292
Medina, 292, 296
Meerath (Meerut), 14fn, 79-80, 234, 240
Mehtar Mahal, 281
Mekran, pass, 32, 38
Merv, 8fn
Mewar, 36, 148-49, 151, 253, 259, 262-64, 321
Mewat, 250
Meykander, 288
Miftahul Futuh, 9-10
Minhaj us Siraj, 8-9, 12-13, 17, 77-78, 82-83, 87-88, 90-92, 95-103, 105-6, 108-13, 117

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education,Bantalab,Jammu

Mir Khwand, 18
Mirat i Ahmadi, 24
Mirat i Ashiqin, 278
Mirat i Sikandri, 24
Mithila (Tirhut), 70, 193
Mongols, the, 9-10, 93-94, 105, 109-10, 112, 114-15, 121-24, 132, 144-46, 159-61, 163-66, 181, 187, 192, 196-97, 208
Mool Raj II (of Anhilwara), 69
Morocco, 19-20
Moth ki masjid, 320
Mabarakabad, 291
Mughisuddin, Qazi, 141-43
Muhammad, Alauddin Khwarizm Shah, 4, 9, 74, 82, 92, 94
Muhammad, Al Makhzani, 278
Muhammad, Imaduddin bin Qasim, 3, 38-40, 297
Muhammad, Sayyad, 16
Muhammad, Shihabuddin (of Ghur) *alias* Muhammad Ghori, 3, 6-8, 26, 35fn, 53fn, 65, 68, 70-90, 94, 96-97, 125-26, 151, 228, 246, 260
Muhammad, Prince (S/o Balban), 120-23
Muhammad, the Prophet, 2, 8, 101, 103-5, 247fn, 292, 309
Muhazzabuddin, 103
Multan, 3, 32, 37-40, 45, 52-53, 55, 59-61, 65, 75-76, 91-93, 99, 102, 104, 106, 109-11, 121-23, 129, 138-40, 143, 145, 163, 165, 187-89, 196-97, 217, 222, 225, 241, 243, 245, 247, 249-50, 297, 305
Multani, Ainul Mulk, 150, 152, 188, 217
Multani, Sheikh Rukunuddin, 197
Muntakhab ut Tawarikh, 22
Murshidabad, 82-83
Muwaidul Mulk, 12
Mysore, 271

Nadia, 81-83
Nag Nayak, 197
Nagabhata, 30
Nagada, 94
Nagarkot (Kangara), 53-55, 211, 220, 233, 236
Nagaur, 94-95, 108-9, 165
Nalanda, 81-82
Nalavenba, 288
Nambudiri, Cherusseri, 289
Nana-Bharana Vilakham, 288
Nandana, 55-56
Nannaya, 288
Narayan (mod. Narayanpur), 55
Narbada, the, 29
Narendra, Rajraja, 288
Narsimha, 36, 269, 331
Narsimha, Vir, 272
Nawasa Shah, 52-53
Nayak, Krishna, 218
Nazim, Muhammad, 53fn
Nepal, 34, 81-82
Nerun, 38
Nicolo Conti, see Conti, Nicolo
Nishapur, 17, 48-49, 87
Nizamuddin, Sheikh, see Auliya, Sheikh Nizamuddin
Nonaraja, Bhatta, 25
Nuh II, 48
Nuh Sipihr, 10-11
Nuniz, Fernao, 283-84

Orissa (Jajnagar), 33, 37, 120, 152, 159, 192, 236, 265, 267-69, 272
Oudh (Kaushal), 10, 12, 69, 93, 109-10, 112, 115-20, 122, 128, 132-33, 137, 148, 217
Oxus, the, 73fn, 74fn

Padmini, Rani, 149
Paes, Domingos, 21-22, 283-86
Pakpattan, 243
Pallas, the, 30, 33, 70-72, 81
Pallavas, the, 36-37
Panchtantra literature, 7-8
Pandua, 321
Pandya, Kulashekhara, 151, 157
Pandya, Sunder, 157
Panday, Vir, 157
Pandyas, the, 37
Panikkar, Rama, 289
Panikkar, Madhava, 289
Panipat, 239, 243, 258
Parmars, the, 34-35, 37, 40-42, 70, 94
Patanjali, 4fn

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Patiali, 116
Peddana, Allasani, 289
Penugonda, 274, 331
Peshawar, 32, 36, 51, 54fn, 75-76
Persia, 2, 5, 47-48, 73fn, 87, 110, 117, 130, 159, 204, 208-10, 242, 275-76, 280, 290, 315
Persian Gulf, 275
Piretagin (or Piray), 47fn, 48fn
Poggio, Braccioline, 8, 22
Poli ka Gumbad, 320
Poona, 197
Poonch, 33
Pope Eugene IV, 22
Portuguese, the, 263, 273, 291
Poyyamoli, 288
Prataprudra, Gajapati, 272
Prajyabhatta, 26
Pratiharas, the, 30, 34-37, 40-42, 57, 68
Prithviraj Chauhan II, see Chauhan, Prithviraja II
Prithviraj Chauhan III, see Chauhan, Prithviraja III
Prithviraj Raso, 26
Prithviraj, Vijaya, 26
Pugalendi, 288
Pulakesin II, 29, 36-37
Punjab, 14, 31-32, 38, 48, 54, 56-57, 60-61, 63-66, 68, 75-77, 82-83, 93, 108, 122, 160-61, 163, 165, 186, 198, 247-48, 354, 321
Puranas, the, 4fn
Puri, 265

Qabacha, Nasiruddin, 3, 8-9, 91-93
Qabul, Malik, 175-76, 179
Qadam Rasul, 322
Qanun i Humayuni, 19
Qarqash, Malik, 104
Qasim, Barinul Mumalik, 270
Qasim, Muhammad bin, see Muhammad bin Qasim
Qila i Rai Pithaura, 89, 317
Qiranus Sa'dain, 9-10
Quran, the, 2, 93-95, 98-99, 107, 292, 296-99, 309-10, 317
Qutlugh Khwaja, 145, 162
Qutub Minar, 89, 91, 96-97, 194fn, 317-18
Qutub Mushtri, 278
Ruwat ul Islam Masjid, 317-18

Raghudeva, 34
Rai, Achyuta, 331
Rai, Sahasi II, 3, 32
Raichur, 197fn, 272
Raihan, Imaduddin, 109-11
Rairaja I, 37
Rajab, Sipahsalar, 187, 189fn, 222
Rajamundry, 269
Rajashahi, 322
Rajatarangini, 25-26, 31fn
Rajendra Chola I, 37
Rajput culture, 41-42
Rajputana, 26, 55, 59, 94, 111, 113, 147-48, 150-52, 159, 178, 248, 259, 263-64
Rajyapala, 30, 57-58, 68
Rama (king of Kurukshetra), 56
Rameshwaram, 157, 290
Rana Sanga, see Rana Sangram Singh
Ranibai, 38
Ranmal, 147
Rann of Kutch, 35, 60, 236
Harpala raja, 110
Ranthambhore, 94, 103, 111, 131-32, 145, 148, 150-52, 163, 188, 263
Rao, Medni, 262
Rashtrakuta, Chandra, 68
Rashtrakuta, Gopala, 68
Rashtrakuta, Kaka II, 37
Rashtrakutas, the, 30, 34, 36-37, 68, 81
Rattan Singh, Rana, see Singh, Rana Rattan
Rauzat us Safa, 18
Ravi, the, 108, 165
Rawalpindi, 64
Rawar, 38
Raya, Krishandeva, 272-73, 287, 289, 331
Raya, Ram, 273-74, 331
Rayamalla, 264
Razi, Malik, 237
Razia Begam, 98-105, 223, 327
Rehla of Ibn Battuta, 19-21, 47, 52, 102-3, 154, 156, 164-65, 187-88, 193, 196, 199-202, 207-9, 215
Rewari, 112, 114

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Riyazul Insha, 25
Riyazus Salatin, 24
Rome, 22
Roopmati, 324
Rukadevi, 67-68
Ruknuddin, Ibrahim, 296
Rumuz uz Satikin, 278
Ruzwane Shah O' Ruhafza, 278

Sabras, 278
Sabuktagin, 5, 9, 31-32, 36, 47-64
Sadasiva, 272, 331
Saffarid dynasty, 32
Sagar, 197-98
Sahiras, 32
Saket, 250
Salar, Malik Izzuddin Muhammad, 101
Saldi, 160
Salim, Ghulam Husain, 24
Saluva dynasty, 271-72
Saman, 47fn
Samana, 121, 124, 126-27, 161, 165, 192, 218, 329
Samanids, the, 5, 47, 49-50, 74fn
Samanta Chauhan, 35
Samarqand, 7fn, 20, 163, 201, 241-43, 245, 258
Sambhar, see Ajmer
Samgramaraja, 33
Sanga Rana, see Singh, Rana Sangram
Sangama dynasty, 270-71
Sanjar, Malik, 137
Santagarh, 110
Sanyogita, 69
Sapadalaksha, 26
Sarwani, Azam Humayun, 251
Sarwar, Malik, Khwaja Jahan, 261
Sathpalah Band, 319
Sayyad, Alauddin Alam Shah, 248-51, 262, 329
Sayyad, Barbak Shah, 251
Sayyad, Khizr Khan, 241-42, 246-50, 320, 329
Sayyad, Mubarak Shah, 16, 248-49, 329
Sayyad, Muhammad Shah, 16, 248-49, 329
Sehwan, 38
Seljuks, the, 73-74
Senas, the (of Bengal), 70
Shadi, Khwaja Fakhr, 227
Shah, Abu Bakr, 328
Shah, Abul Muzafar Alauddin Bahman *alias* Hasan Gangu, 219, 266-67, 331
Shah, Ahmad (Bahmanid), 268
Shah, Ahmad I (of Gujarat), 263, 277-78, 280, 323
Shah, Alauddin Ahmad II, 331
Shah, Alauddin Firoze, 261
Shah, Alauddin Husain, 252, 261
Shah, Alauddin Masud, 104-5, 107fn, 112, 327
Shah, Alauddin Mujahid, 267-68, 276, 331
Shah, Alauddin Sikander, 240
Shah, Ali Adil II, 25, 28
Shah, Amir Ali Barid, 270
Shah, Aram, 7, 9, 89, 91-92, 94, 327
Shah, Bahadur (of Gujarat), 262-63
Shah, Bahman (of Gujarat), 277
Shah, Barbak (of Bengal), 261
Shah, Daud, 23, 298, 331
Shah, Fakhruddin Mubarak, 217, 260
Shah, Fatehullah Imad, 270
Shah, Ghiasuddin Mahmud (of Bengal), 71fn, 261
Shah, Ghiasuddin Tahmatan, 331
Shah, Humayun (Bahmanid), 268-69, 331
Shah, Hushang, 262, 323
Shah, Ibrahim Adil II, 278
Shah, Jahan, 15, 16fn
Shah, Jalaluddin Muhammad, 261, 321
Shah, Mahmud alias Baghera, 263
Shah, Mahmud (Bahmanid), 270
Shah, Miran, 278
Shah, Muhammad I, 239-41, 267, 331
Shah, Muhammad II, 268, 275, 331
Shah, Muhammad III, 269-70, 331
Shah, Muizuddin Behram, 8, 102-4, 112, 327
Shah, Muzafar I (of Gujarat), 263, 322
Shah, Muzafar II (of Gujarat), 263

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Shah, Nasiruddin Mahmud, 240
Shah, Nizam Malik Ahmad, 268-70
Shah, Nizamuddin Ahmad II, 331
Shah, Nusrat (of Bengal), 134, 261, 297
Shah, Nusrat (Tughluq, of Delhi), 239-41
Shah, (Bahmanid), 270
Shah, Qutubuddin Mubarak, see Khalji, Qutubuddin Mubarakshah
Shah, Rukh Mirza, 20-21, 284
Shah, Saiyyid Ahsan, 216
Shah, Shamsuddin, 265
Shah, Shamsuddin Ilyas, 217
Shah, ShamsuddinMuhammad III, 331
Shah, Shihabuddin Ahmad I, 331
Shah, Sikander, 261, 265, 321, 329
Shah, Tughluq II, 328
Shah, Tuskan, 98-100
Shah, Yusuf Adil, 270
Shahin, Malik, 150
Shahazadi ka Rouza, 324
Shansabanis, the, 6, 9, 73-75
Sharqi, Husain Shah, 262
Sharqi, Ibrahim Shah, 261-62, 322
Sharqi, Mahmud Shah, 251, 262
Sharqi, Mubarak Shah, 261-62
Shiraz, 262, 322
Shirazi, Rafiuddin, 24
Shish Gumbad, 320
Shiwaliks, the, 163
Sialkot, 16
Siddi Maula, 129, 131-32
Siestan, 32, 52, 60
Sikander bin Muhammad, 24
Silajij, 3
Simharaja, Khasa, 33fn
Sind, 3, 12, 19, 24, 30, 32, 37-40, 45, 60, 65, 67, 75-76, 88, 91-93, 99, 109-11, 140-41, 143, 145, 160-61, 187, 189, 196-98, 215, 236, 247, 297
Singh, Jai (of Chittor), 264
Singh, Kshetra, 94, 263
Singh, Namwar, 26 fn
Singh, Rana Rattan, 149-50, 263
Singh, Rana Sangram, 253, 262, 264-65
Singhana, 134
Sirhind, 57, 249-50
Sirhindi, Yahya Ahmad, 16-17
Siri, (Delhi), 244, 290, 294fn
Sirmur hills, 101, 110
Sirohi, 81
Sirsa, 77, 243
Siva Nana Bodam, 288
Siva Nana Sittiyar, 288
Sivaprakasa Perundirattu, 288
Siyarul Auliya, 199-200
Sola Khamba, 280
Somanatha, 35, 58-60, 145
Somanatha Palkemki, 289
Someshwar, 67-68
Sonargaon (Dacca), 217, 220, 260
Sringeri, 271
Srirangam, 290
Srivara, 25
Subhandevi, 3
Suka, 26
Sulaiman ranges, 48
Sulakshan Paul, 80
Suleman, Malik, 247
Sultan Garhi, 318
Sultan, Prince Muhammad, 242-43
Sumatra, 21
Sumras, the, 65, 76
Sunam, 121, 131, 217, 219, 243
Sunjar, Abu Ali, 48fn
Sunqar, Badruddin, 104
Sunqar, Sher Khan, 108-9, 111, 119, 121
Sur, Adil Shah, 23
Sur, Sher Shah, 15, 167, 180-82, 249, 261, 263, 300, 306
Suri, Muhammad bin, 73fn
Suri Saifuddin, 9, 73fn
Surkha, Aitmar, 127
Swat, 265
Sylhet, 34, 71

Tabakat i Akbari, 22
Tabakat i Nasiri, 8-9, 12-13, 17, 77-78, 82-83, 87-88, 90-92, 95-103, 105-6, 108-13, 117
Tabarhind, see Bhatinda
Tabataba, Sayyad Ali, 24, 278
Taghi, 219
Tailapa, 37
Tajiks, the, 74
Taj ul Futuh, 6
Taj ul Ma'asir, 7, 97

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Talib, Abu, 16fn
Talikota, 273, 331
Tamberan, Velliyambla, 288
Tanjai Vanam Kovai, 288
Tanjore, 37
Tantipara, 322
Tarain (Taraori), 7, 68, 76-78, 92, 125, 317
Tarikh i Baihaqi, 6
Tarkh i Daudi, 23
Tarikh i Firishta, 17, 33, 48, 51, 53-55, 58-59, 77-78, 118, 120, 134, 154-57, 164-65, 168, 170, 176-80, 183, 187, 190, 193, 195-96, 199-200, 210-11, 239-40, 242, 267, 278
Tarikh i Firoze Shahi (Barani), 1fn, 11-14, 17, 79-80, 114-18, 120-23, 125-34, 136-47, 152-58, 160-62, 164-66, 168-77, 179-80, 184-85, 190-91, 193-96, 198-204, 206-13, 216, 221, 299
Tarikh i Firoze Shahi (Afif), 14-15, 221-22, 225-30, 233, 235-36
Tarikh i Gujarat, 24
Tarikh i Ilahi, see *Khazain ul Futuh*
Tarikh i Khan Jahani (or *Makhazan i Afghani*), 23
Tarikh i Masudi, 6
Tarikh i Mubarak Shahi, 16-17
Tarikh i Rashidi, 26fn
Tarikh i Sabuktagin (or *Tarikh i Ali Sabuktagin*), 6
Tarikh i Salatin i Afghana (or *Tarikh i Shahi*), 23
Tarikh i Sikandri, 279
Tarikh i Sind, 24
Tarikhi ul Hind, 3-8, 31-33, 43-44, 49, 59
Tarikh i Yamini, 5-6
Tarmashirin, 208-10
Tash, Khwaja, 163-64
Tazkirat ul Muluk, 24
Telingana, 151-52, 154-56, 158, 191-92, 216, 219, 225, 267-68, 270
Thakuri dynasty, 34
Thanesar, 29fn, 33, 55-56
Thatta, 12, 219, 221, 23
Tibet, 81-82
Tikkana, 288
Timur, see Amir Timur
Tin Darwaza, 323
Tinnevelley, 290
Tirhut, see Mithila
Tiru Valur, 290
Tirumala, 273
Token currency, 203-9
Topra, 14fn, 15, 234
Toynbee, Arnold, 1, 42, 83-86
Transoxiana, 47fn, 160, 163, 196, 208-10, 276
Travelogues, the, 19-20
Tribeni, 321
Trichinopoly, 271
Tripura (or Tripuri), 36
Trilochanapala, 56-57
Tughluq, Abu Bakr, 187, 189 fn
Tughluq, Firoze, 12-16, 34fn, 71, 221-39, 241, 243, 249, 254-55, 257, 260-61 263, 265, 293, 296, 307-8, 311-12, 319-20, 322, 325, 328
Tughluq, Ghiasuddin I, 10-11, 15, 164-65, 185-94, 197-98, 214, 222-23, 239-40, 261 fn, 290, 319, 328
Tughluq, Ghiasuddin II, (Tughluq Shah), 239-40, 328
Tughluq, Mahmud, 244, 249fn, 261, 328
Tughluq, Muhammad bin, 11-13, 15, 17, 19-20, 142 fn, 188, 191-225, 233, 235-37, 239, 241, 255-57, 260-61, 263, 266, 271, 274, 279, 290-91, 293, 307-8, 310, 319, 322, 325, 328
Tughluq, Nasiruddin Mahmud, 329
Tughluq, Nusrat Shah, 329
Tughluq, Rajab, Sipahasalar, see Rajab, Sipahsalar
Tughluqabad, 65fn, 194, 319
Tughlaqnama, 9-11
Tughrill, Bahauddin, 9
Tulamba, 243
Tuluva dynasty, 272-73
Tumars, the, 64, 67
Tungbhadra, the, 36, 109, 197fn, 271-74
Turk-bachha, 248
Turkistan, 47fn, 48fn, 73fn, 109, 187
Turi, Shaikh Abu Bakr, 131
Tuzuk, 242-45

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Uchh, 3, 8, 65, 75, 91, 93-95, 104, 106, 110, 121-23, 197, 241, 243
Udabhanda, see Waihand
Udayaraja, 33
Ujjain, 34, 69-70, 94, 96, 132, 150, 200, 216, 323-24
Umar, the Caliph, 143-44, 297fn
Umar Maulana Nasiruddin, 244fn
Umar Shihabuddin, 183-85, 296
Umayyids, the, 38-39
Unnunili Sandesam, 289
Unsari, 62
Urmuz, 277
Usman, the Caliph, 48fn, 143
Utba, 5
Utbi, 5-6, 51-52, 57-58, 62, 73
Uttar Pradesh, 159, 213
Uzbeks, the, 18

Vaidyanatha, 71
Vakpati II, 35
Vali, Mir Abu Turab, 24
Vallabhadeva, 71
Varanasi, 36, 39, 69, 79-81, 94
Vardhana, Durlabh, 33
Vardhana, Harsha, 29-30, 32-33, 39, 40
Vardhana, Prabhakar, 29fn
Vasco de Gama, 291
Vatapi, 35 ; Early Chalukyas of, 35-36
Vellore, 290
Vemana, 289
Venga, 33
Venice, 21
Vidyadhara, 36, 57-58, 69-70
Vidyaranya, 271
Vijaya I, 331
Vijaya II, 331
Vijaya Chandra, 69
Vijayanagar, 20-22, 25-26, 197fn, 218, 266-67, 271-79, 321, 324, 326, 331
Villiputturar, 288
Vindhyas, the, 36fn, 67, 132, 151, 325
Vir Ballala III, 151, 157,-58
Virbhadra, 289
Virinchipuram, 290
Virupaksha I, 331
Virupaksha II, 272, 331
Visaldeva or Vigrahraja IV, see Bisaldeva
Vishnumati, the, 34

Waihand or Udabhandapur, 31-32, 51, 54, 56
Wajabi, 278
Walid I, the Umayyid Caliph, 3, 38
Waliullah, 331
Warrangal, 151, 156-57, 191-92, 195 198, 211, 218, 266-68, 270-71
Waziristan, 51fn

Yadvas, the, 34, 133-34
Yadgar, Ahmad, 23, 88-89, 91-92
Yakub, Malik, 179-80
Yakut, Jalaluddin, 101-2
Yaldoz, Tajuddin, 9, 88-93
Yamuna (Jamuna), the, 66, 79, 135, 157, 164, 243
Yaqub bin Lais, 32
Yasovarman, 29-30, 36
Yazd Jurd i Shahryar, 48fn
Yazdi, Maulana, 16
Yerrapragada, *Prabandha Parameswara*, 288
Yule, H., 21fn

Zabul or Zabulistan, 31-32
Zachcha Bachcha, 281
Zafarnama (of Maulana Yazdi), 16
Zainul Abidin, 25-26, 265
Zainul Akhbar, 51
Zaman, Sultan Badiuz, 18
Zubak, 73fn

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